Commentary
April 1999

Is There a "Third Way"?
Elliott Abrams

The Pope, the Church, and the Jews
Robert S. Wistrich

How to Wreck NATO
Joshua Muravchik

Musical Masterpieces of the Century: A Critical Guide
Terry Teachout

Mythologizing King Hussein
David Wurmser

Of Professors and Pedophiles
Barbara Lerner

Being Matisse
Steven C. Munson

Books in Review
Algis Valiunas • Donald Lyons • Harvey Klehr
Edward Alexander • Daniel Casse

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PEOPLE ARE GOING TO ATTACK EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS STORY. EXCEPT THE FACTS.

>HEDGE FUND STORY: COVERING THE FACTS

4/3
Jim Clash has uncovered hot story on hedge funds. They're secret, unregulated, carry huge risks, and everyone wants to be in one. Clash calls it "fund envy." Problem is fund managers are charging the hell out of their clients and they can't even beat S&P 500. We've got to get it into this issue.

4/6 (8am)
Bringing in Dolly to fact check. She's perfect for this...worked in mutual funds in past life...understands the numbers. She's got to. There are 20 sources, hundreds of facts and 48 hours till press.

4/6 (2pm)
Most sources cooperating, but it's tricky. Everyone must be reached. Call assistants... call spouses...call mothers if you have to. It's all got to check. Spell a name wrong – you trash the story's credibility. Screw up a couple words – you're talking to someone's lawyers.

4/7 (11pm)
2 hours to deadline. Almost everything's covered. Whatever isn't, comes out. Do some warm, fuzzy piece and no one's going to challenge facts. Print a contrary opinion and you better double-check the spelling of your own name.

>BUSINESS REPORTING AS TOUGH AS BUSINESS ITSELF>

Forbes
CAPITALIST TOOL®

www.forbes.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary®

Vol. 107 · April 1999 · No. 4

ARTICLES

17

Is There a "Third Way"? *Elliott Abrams*
Like his European counterparts, Bill Clinton champions a new politics between Left and Right that is less, or other, than advertised.

22

The Pope, the Church, and the Jews *Robert S. Wistrich*
A dramatic betterment in relations cannot mask the failure, so far, to arrive at an honest reckoning with the past.

29

How to Wreck NATO *Joshua Muravchik*
As its 50th anniversary looms, history's most successful and still urgently necessary partnership is coming undone.

34

Mythologizing King Hussein *David Wurmser*
Despite the eulogies, the monarch's record was largely one of narrow and timorous views and disastrous missteps.

OBSERVATIONS

38

Of Professors and Pedophiles *Barbara Lerner*
The specter of child molestation haunts this generation's parents; the scholars are very clever but very clueless.

41

Being Matisse *Steven C. Munson*
Out of a lifelong struggle to heal the chaos within, there emerged the most powerfully restorative works of modern art.

MUSIC

46

Masterpieces of the Century: A Critical Guide *Terry Teachout*
It is time to rewrite the history of modern music: herewith, in the first of three installments, a new—and much improved—canon.

LETTERS

3

Israel & the bomb; a Palestinian state; Vietnam; etc.

BOOKS

51 Freedom from Fear by David M. Kennedy *Algis Valiunas*

53 Shakespeare by Harold Bloom *Donald Lyons*

56 A Covert Life by Ted Morgan *Harvey Klehr*

58 Enlarging America by Susanne Klingenstein *Edward Alexander*

62 The Future and Its Enemies by Virginia Postrel *Daniel Casse*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Editor Neal Kozodoy
Managing Editor Brenda Brown
Senior Editor Gabriel Schoenfeld
Associate Editor Gary Rosen
Editor-at-Large Norman Podhoretz
Publisher Jonathan R. Cohen
Advertising Director Sarah M. Stern
Production Assistant Mark Lerer

COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022 Telephone: (212) 751-4000. Fax: (212) 751-1174. E-MAIL: Commentary@compuserve.com. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Letters intended for publication may be edited. Single copy is $4.50; $45 a year, 2 years $79, 3 years $109—Add $11.00 per year for all foreign subscriptions, including Canada and Latin America. For subscription information call: (800) 829-6270—Periodical postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022. Copyright © 1999 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—Indexed in *Reader's Guide*, *Book Review Digest*, and elsewhere—Available in reference systems produced by University Microfilms International (800) 521-0600 and Information Access Company (800) 227-8431—U.S. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors Inc., 1130 Cleveland Rd., Sandusky, OH 44870. Printed in the U.S.A.

COMMENTARY is a member of The Leadership Network, Teri Schure, Chairperson.
(212) 375-1575; Fax (212) 982-6968.

The Commentary Publication Committee

Robert L. Pelz, *Chairman*

Morris B. Abram
Stanford M. Adelstein
Norman E. Alexander
Morris H. Bergreen
Maurice S. Binkow
Howard I. Friedman
Stephen Friedman
Roger Hertog
Morton A. Kornreich
Herman J. Obermayer
Robert A. Riesman
Gordon S. Rosenblum
Gary L. Rosenthal
Michael Saperstein
Michael W. Schwartz
Nanette Scofield
Henry Sherman
Walter P. Stern
Thomas J. Tisch
Ronald G. Weiner

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

American Jewish Committee

Bruce M. Ramer, *President*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary
April 1999

Letters from Readers

The Middle East 1: Israel & the Bomb

To the Editor:

In "Thinking About the Unthinkable in the Middle East" [December 1998], Gabriel Schoenfeld brilliantly dissects the underlying factors in the regional drive toward nuclearization and their implications. He aptly notes that Israel's quest for the bomb has been exclusively motivated by defensive considerations rather than by hegemonic aspirations; that Israel's perceived nuclear status has imparted "a measure of stability to the world's most volatile region"; that the attainment of nuclear weapons by such "rogue states" as Iran and Iraq is in the offing; and that such a development would not only endanger Middle Eastern stability but could also pose a real threat to the United States itself. Hence the significance of his conclusion that while "Israel's own nuclear arsenal has never been so crucial a part of its armament as it is right now," it will be a wasting asset against military disaster "unless measures are taken to halt the Middle East's rogue states in their nuclear tracks, or to protect against their certain depredations."

The importance of these observations cannot be overstated. At a time when there is international reluctance to participate in sanctions against Iran; when the economic and political *cordon sanitaire* around Iraq has been decisively loosened, as indicated, *inter alia*, by the lukewarm international response to Operation Desert Fox; and when a phony linkage between the decade-long Gulf crisis and the vicissitudes of the Palestinian problem has been firmly established in world public opinion, there is a very real risk that the international community will look in the wrong direction in its efforts to contain the nuclearization of the Middle East.

Indeed, for quite some time Israel's nuclear program has been singled out as both the foremost catalyst of regional proliferation and the main stumbling block on the road to Arab-Israeli peace. This thesis is fundamentally misconceived. The Arab-Israeli conflict is neither the sole nor even the main source of instability in the Middle East. A string of political, ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, and territorial disputes has transformed the region into one of the most volatile in the world, giving its various states more than enough reasons to arm themselves to the teeth irrespective of Israel's activities. Indeed, the historical record shows no linkage between Israel's nuclear program and similar regional endeavors. Iran's nuclear quest, for example, which began well before the creation of the Islamic republic, was an offspring of Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi's hegemonic aspirations. And Iraq's mid-1970's decision to embark on the same route came in direct response to the Iranian, not the Israeli, threat.

Since none of these programs was triggered by Israel's nuclear program, and none is primarily retained with the Israeli threat in mind, they are not something that can be negotiated away in return for Israel's nuclear disarmament. Having spent billions of dollars on nuclear development, the ayatollahs in Teheran are unlikely to shelve their nuclear ambitions, even if Israel were to be disarmed tomorrow; nor will Saddam Hussein, for whom nuclear weapons have always been the ultimate guarantee of his personal rule, relinquish them even if Israel ceased to exist.

Even worse, if Israel were to do the unthinkable and decide on unilateral denuclearization, it would only increase the appeal of nonconventional weapons to other regional states, since there would be no comparable system to deter the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deployment, and even employment, of such weapons. This, in turn, would deal a mortal blow to the nascent Arab-Israeli peace process. If there is one overriding reason why Arabs and Israelis are now prepared to engage in peaceful negotiations over the resolution of their hundred-years' war, it is the recognition of the futility of armed force as a foreign-policy instrument. This is a peace born of grudging disillusionment, not of mutual love and affinity; and Israel's nuclear arsenal has played a decisive, if tacit, role in producing this state of mind. Remove this critical factor from the regional strategic equation and the entire peace process will collapse like a house of cards.

So where does all this leave us? Mr. Schoenfeld is undoubtedly correct to advocate a redoubled international effort "to halt the Middle East's rogue states in their nuclear tracks." Not because of their inherent irrationality; for, contrary to the commonplace view, such states have acted in a perfectly rational way. Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons, for example, though devoid of any moral inhibitions, as shown by the indiscriminate gassing of hapless civilians in Kurdistan, has always been carefully calculated, taking place where there was absolutely no risk of retaliation. Rather, it is precisely the ruthless rationality of the Middle East's dictatorial/totalitarian regimes that makes their possession of nuclear weapons all the more dangerous. In a political system where absolute leaders supersede state institutions and the notion of national interest is highly personalized; where power is often concentrated in the hands of a tiny minority group (e.g., the Alawites in Syria or the Sunnis in Iraq); where no orderly mechanisms for political participation and peaceful transfer of power exist; and where the goal of regime survivability supersedes everything else, physical force has become the foremost mode of political discourse: from civil strife, to interstate wars, to domestic repression. Should such rulers and/or regimes deem themselves to be in mortal danger, they would have no scruples about resorting to nonconventional means, including nuclear weapons, whether against their own population or against external enemies.

Yet while the containment of Middle Eastern nuclear proliferation is certainly a necessary condition for regional stability, it may not be a sufficient one unless accompanied by real progress toward regional reconciliation. As has been demonstrated in the context of East-West relations, significant reductions in armaments follow superpower détente, not the other way around. Where hostility is intense and distrust is great, the prospects for massive reductions in weaponry remain slim. In the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict, or for that matter the Iraqi-Iranian rivalry, the political aspects of the dispute need to be seriously addressed before investing significant efforts in getting the parties to reduce their arsenals.

Only when a stable and comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli dispute has been reached, comprising the second tier of protagonists such as Iraq, Libya, Algeria, and (non-Arab) Iran, and given ample time to prove its endurance and to produce a genuine sea change of sentiments and attitudes at the grass-roots level, can far-reaching arms-control regimes in the Middle East be negotiated and established. This may take a generation or more. But the alternative is too horrendous to contemplate.

EFRAIM KARSH
King's College
University of London
London, England

TO THE EDITOR:

Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion's implicit nuclear deterrent has served

Gramercy Park Hotel

Your Private Oasis Just South of Midtown Manhattan

Imagine...You're just minutes away from a trip to Europe!
Whether you're dining on one of Chef Robert's 20 freshly prepared pastas ($12.50 - $19.50) or planning a wedding, (packages begin at just $57 per person), you'll find our hotel to be an oasis of Olde World charm. With Soho, the Village, Madison Square Garden and Off-Broadway theaters in the neighborhood, make it your business to pleasure yourself in style.
Our weekend Brunch ($14.95) is also a longtime favorite.

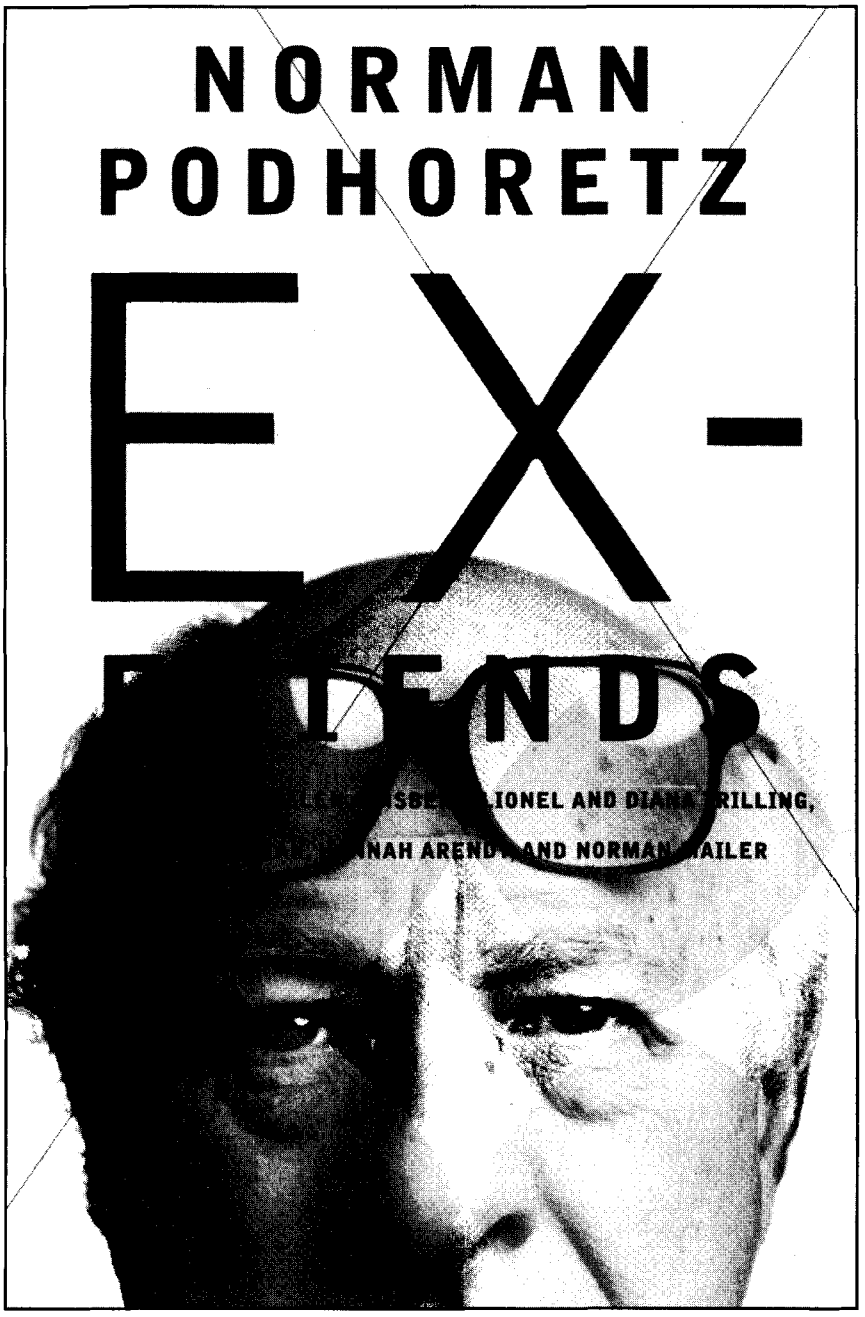
Singles $155-$160 • Doubles $170 • Suites $200-$240

21st Street & Lexington Ave.
New York, NY 10010
212-475-4320
Fax (212) 505-0535
Out of state call toll-free:
1-800-221-4083

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Special Offer to COMMENTARY *Readers*

Save $8.75



Copies of Norman Podhoretz's extraordinary new book, *Ex-Friends,* are available at a special discount of 35% off the cover price of $25 when purchased directly from COMMENTARY. You may also purchase, for $50, a copy personally inscribed by the author. Shipping and handling included.

"A hot ticket to the history of an explosive set of ideas."
—Cynthia Ozick

"[A] deliciously gossipy and scintillating recollection of our times."
—Christopher Lehmann-Haupt,
The New York Times

"Hits like a tumbler-full of vodka. It is breathtaking, bracing, shocking, perfectly clear, highly intoxicating."
—David Gelernter,
The New York Post

TO ORDER: send $16.25 for each copy, $50 for each personally inscribed copy, to:

Ex-Friends
c/o Commentary
165 East 56th Street
NY, NY 10022

To order with a credit card by phone, call (800) 829-6270.

Yes, please send me ____copy(ies) of *Ex-Friends*
and/or ____inscribed copy(ies) of *Ex-Friends.*
Total amount $_____
Name_____
Address_____
_____Zip_____
❑ Bill me ❑ Amex/MC/Visa
Card #_____Exp_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Israel very well for more than 30 years, but Gabriel Schoenfeld is right to sound the alarm. As Iraq and Iran move closer to becoming nuclear powers, Israeli policy needs to be, and is being, reexamined. Since a posture of ambiguity is a central element in that policy, the debate that is now being conducted among Israeli decision-makers may not get much media attention, but this does not mean that the changes in the security environment and the dangers are being ignored.

At its core, this debate is about the relative strengths and weaknesses of deterrence and defensive strategies, and how best to combine them. As Mr. Schoenfeld notes, the Arrow ballistic-missile defense system should provide a short-term and limited shield against SCUD-era missiles, but it would not be likely to protect Israeli cities were the other states in the region to launch a large number of SCUD's in a single salvo, or acquire more advanced delivery systems that can defeat terminal-defense systems such as the Arrow.

Boost-phase intercept (BPI) technology, if successful, would have the advantage of combining a high degree of defense with deterrence. By destroying offensive systems early in their flights, BPI would inflict a heavy penalty on aggressor states. When an outgoing missile is hit by a BPI system, the warhead (nuclear, chemical, or biological) falls back onto the territory of origin. Fail-safe devices can reduce the probability of a nuclear detonation, but the damage from the radioactive material or chemical/biological agents in the warheads would be significant. At the same time, the effort to launch a first strike would lead to an immediate and massive counterstrike. As a result, an effective BPI system would force rational decision-makers to think twice before launching missiles.

The main problem (beyond the assumption that adversaries will be rational) is that BPI is not much more than an attractive concept at this stage, and there are formidable obstacles to its development and deployment. The U.S. airborne laser program (ABL) has yet to demonstrate that lasers of sufficient power can damage missiles in flight, but even if this could be done, the ABL itself would be highly vulnerable to an enemy first strike. The Israeli concept, based on multiple unmanned airborne vehicles (UAV's) carrying small and very accurate missiles, may be more feasible in terms of the technology, but would require the continuous presence of a large number of UAV's always on station within striking distance (tens of kilometers, at most) of potential ballistic-missile launch sites. Since ground-based mobile launchers can be placed just about anywhere, and are hard to find (as the U.S. military discovered during the Gulf war), UAV-based systems may also not solve the problem.

This leaves deterrence, which may be the least bad of the available options in the "new" Middle East. Over the past three decades, it seems to have brought the Arab world, one state at a time, to the realization that military attempts to destroy Israel would be futile and suicidal. Despite their rhetoric, Arab and even Iranian leaders have acted rationally in stopping short of a full-scale confrontation with Israel. Saddam Hussein fired about 40 conventional missiles at Israel, but he was careful to avoid using a single chemical warhead. The evidence indicates that while Saddam calculated (correctly) that he and his regime would survive U.S. air attacks, he also calculated that he would not survive an Israeli counterattack.

At the same time, the inherent difficulties in developing an explicit survivable second-strike deterrent force, and maintaining stability in a Middle East of many nuclear powers, should not be underestimated. The concept of mutual assured destruction (MAD) was problematic enough during the cold war, with two powers, separated by thousands of miles. Academics are still debating whether the world survived because of MAD, or despite it. In the Middle East, the distances are much smaller, the level of conflict and hatred more intense, and the number of actors would be greater than two. The leaders may be rational in terms of seeking to avoid national and personal suicide, but the potential for miscalculation, given the extent of misperception and distortion, is very high.

The optimal solution would be to prevent, or at least delay, the need to make these decisions for as long as possible, by blocking the Iraqi and Iranian nuclear programs. Perhaps ten or twenty more years would bring about political changes in the region that would obviate Israel's requirement for a strategic policy based on deterrence and massive retaliation. However, with the passivity of the Clinton administration in the face of the flow of Russian technology to Iran, and Saddam Hussein's triumphant return to the Middle East stage, the option of technological denial is rapidly disappearing. Having acquired ballistic-missile technology, Iran is now only a few years away from becoming a nuclear power, with the assistance of the Russian atomic energy ministry. As a result, Israeli leaders and decision-makers (from the Left and Right—on this issue alone, policy is above politics) are indeed "thinking about the unthinkable," and attempting to define and implement the least bad of the available options. In this sense, the transition from ambiguous deterrence to a policy based on the combination of strategic defense and assured second-strike deterrence has already begun.

GERALD STEINBERG
BESA Center for Strategic Studies
Bar Ilan University
Ramat Gan, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

In "Thinking About the Unthinkable in the Middle East," Gabriel Schoenfeld says much of value about military threats to Israel, but more remains to be said. Mr. Schoenfeld mentions that during the 1973 Yom Kippur war, the U.S. placed its forces on a global alert to counter the Soviet Union's threat of sending its own forces to the Middle East. This key decision by President Nixon was derided by liberals as an attempt to divert attention from Watergate. Desperately needed munitions were ordered to Israel by Nixon, whom most Jews had voted against. The supplies were flown in C5A's, planes that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

liberals opposed as too expensive and unreliable. After other "allies" refused landing rights, the planes refueled in Portugal, which liberals deemed too undemocratic to be our ally. Thus, Israel was saved by persons and policies that liberals and most American Jews opposed.

Fast-forward to the present. Israel and the U.S. have no defense against strategic missiles. This lack is especially critical for Israel, where one nuclear blast would devastate a major portion of the tiny nation. In 1992 and again in 1996, most American Jews voted for President Clinton, who, until his recent conversion, opposed building a missile-defense system, and who has drastically cut our military forces while demoralizing them with incessant deployments.

Opposition to the use of force against aggressive dictators and to self-defense against nuclear missiles is contrary to Jewish values as well as to common sense. Israel was lucky in 1973; it may not be so lucky again.

DAVID C. STOLINSKY
Los Angeles, California

GABRIEL SCHOENFELD writes:

I had hoped that one of my correspondents might point to ways in which my analysis was overdrawn, or show how, for reasons I had not considered, Israel's position is not as perilous as I had made it out to be in my article. Alas, Efraim Karsh and Gerald Steinberg, both highly knowledgeable in this sensitive area, appear to agree that things are very bad and likely to get worse.

Both Mr. Karsh and Mr. Steinberg refer to the debate now under way in Israel about how to deal with the ballistic-missile threat. I tend to agree with Mr. Karsh that it would be a mistake for Israel to move toward a more explicit posture of nuclear deterrence. The costs in Israel's relationship with the United States would certainly be great and little would be gained in the Arab world, except, as Mr. Karsh points out, to inject the nuclear question into already inflamed Arab politics. It is interesting to note in this connection that Avner Cohen, who in his *Israel and the Bomb* criticizes Israel's policy of nuclear "opacity," nevertheless opposes any abrupt change on the grounds that it would "damage Israel's greatly improved position in the region and the world, and could generate pressure on Israel to give up nuclear weapons entirely."

The more fundamental issue, of course, is not Israel's declaratory posture, but the situation on the ground. Israel's position in the region can hardly be said to be improving as it becomes ever more vulnerable to missile attack.

The Middle East 2: A Palestinian State

TO THE EDITOR:

Douglas J. Feith [January] notes that during the Wye negotiations, the Clinton administration "could have made clear that it would not recognize a unilaterally declared Palestinian state"—yet Clinton's negotiators did not do so, and the President himself has never done so. This raises the frightening possibility that the administration would acquiesce in the establishment of such a state, which would, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has put it, "pose a mortal threat to Israel."

A state of "Palestine" would be able to build a full-fledged army within a few miles of the cities that contain 70 percent of Israel's entire population. It would be able to develop or import advanced missiles, chemical warheads, and other weapons of mass destruction. "Palestine" would be able to sign military pacts with rogue regimes such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Libya, thereby tightening the noose around Israel's neck. A single tank column from "Palestine" or its allies would be able to slice Israel in two at its midsection, where Israel is just nine miles wide. And the long border between Is-

"The Media, The Middle East And The Missing Peace"

SUNDAY APRIL 18, 1999

Program Highlights

David Bar-Illan, Director of Policy Planning and Communication, Office of the Prime Minister, Israel	**"Communicating with the Correspondents"**
Charles Krauthammer, Syndicated Columnist	**"The Coming Palestinian State"**
Andrea Levin, President and Executive Director, CAMERA	**"The New York Times and the Peace Process"**
Alexander Safian, Ph.D. Associate Director, CAMERA	**"Bias is a three letter word: CNN and NPR on Israel"**
Professor Ruth Wisse, Harvard University	**"Does the New York Times have a Jewish Problem?"**

CAMERA, The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to promoting full, accurate and balanced media coverage of Israel and the Middle East.

A National Conference sponsored by
CAMERA
The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America

Grand Hyatt Hotel
New York City
Park Avenue at Grand Central

Fee:
$85 per person,
$45 for full-time students.

This includes a continental breakfast and lunch.
(Dietary laws observed)

For more information call
Paula Dahari, Director of Development
(617) 789-3672

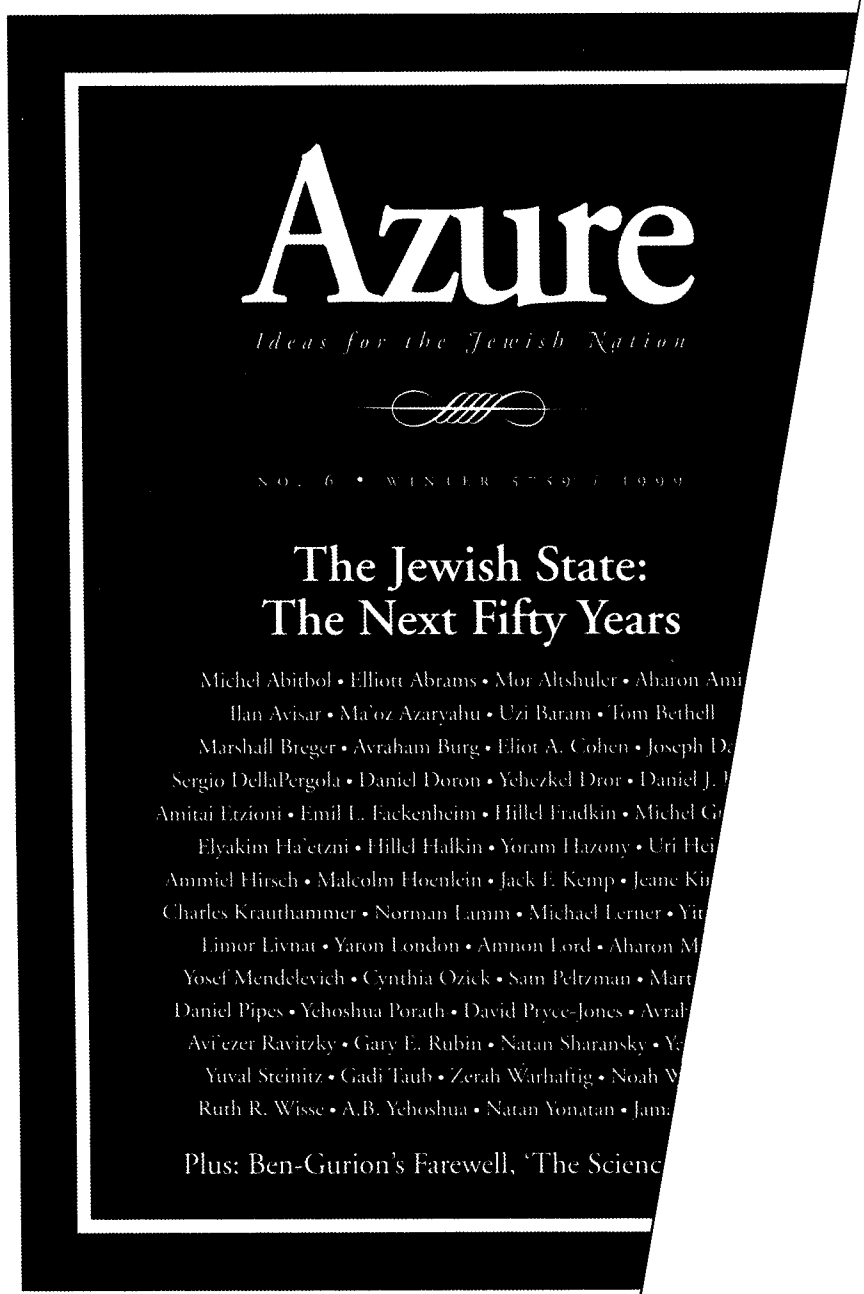
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America
CAMERA
P.O. Box 428, Boston, MA 02456-0428
Telephone: (617) 789-3672
Telefax: (617) 787-7853
com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Do We Still Need A Jewish State?

A symposium with:

Elliott Abrams
Uzi Baram
Marshall Breger
Avraham Burg
Eliot A. Cohen
Daniel Doron
Amitai Etzioni
Emil L. Fackenheim
Hillel Halkin
Malcolm Hoenlein
Jack F. Kemp
Jeane Kirkpatrick
Charles Krauthammer
Norman Lamm
Michael Lerner
Limor Livnat
Aharon Megged
Yosef Mendelevich
Cynthia Ozick
Martin Peretz
Daniel Pipes
Yehoshua Porath
David Pryce-Jones
Avi'ezer Ravitzky
Natan Sharansky
Noah Weinberg
Ruth R. Wisse
A.B. Yehoshua
and others....


Azure
Ideas for the Jewish Nation
NO. 6 • WINTER 5759 / 1999
The Jewish State:
The Next Fifty Years
Michel Abitbol • Elliott Abrams • Mor Altshuler • Aharon Ami
Ilan Avisar • Ma'oz Azaryahu • Uzi Baram • Tom Bethell
Marshall Breger • Avraham Burg • Eliot A. Cohen • Joseph D
Sergio DellaPergola • Daniel Doron • Yehezkel Dror • Daniel J.
Amitai Etzioni • Emil L. Fackenheim • Hillel Fradkin • Michel G
Elyakim Ha'etzni • Hillel Halkin • Yoram Hazony • Uri Hei
Ammiel Hirsch • Malcolm Hoenlein • Jack F. Kemp • Jeane Kir
Charles Krauthammer • Norman Lamm • Michael Lerner • Yit
Limor Livnat • Yaron London • Amnon Lord • Aharon M
Yosef Mendelevich • Cynthia Ozick • Sam Peltzman • Mart
Daniel Pipes • Yehoshua Porath • David Pryce-Jones • Avra
Avi'ezer Ravitzky • Gary E. Rubin • Natan Sharansky • Y
Yuval Steinitz • Gadi Taub • Zerah Warhaftig • Noah W
Ruth R. Wisse • A.B. Yehoshua • Natan Yonatan • Jam
Plus: Ben-Gurion's Farewell, 'The Scienc

In its Winter issue, AZURE magazine presents "The Jewish State: The Next Fifty Years," a symposium with essays by 56 leading opinion-makers from Israel and around the world, expressing their thoughts, fears and dreams for the future of the Jewish State.

Subscribe today and receive four issues of AZURE for just $26!

AZURE 1140 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20036
Toll-free number: 1-877-298-7300 E-mail: shalemorder@shalem.org.il www.azure.org.il

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rael and "Palestine" would give terrorists an enormous area from which to launch attacks against Israelis.

The United States should explicitly join Israel in opposition to the establishment of what would be, in effect, a PLO/Hamas mini-Iraq along Israel's longest border.

MORTON A. KLEIN
National President
Zionist Organization of America
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

In his excellent article, Douglas J. Feith refers to the "proviso in the 1917 Balfour Declaration (about not prejudicing the rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine)." This description is not quite correct and unless explained could easily be misinterpreted.

The League of Nations mandate for Palestine, which adopted the Balfour Declaration's language on this question, states in its preamble that "nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

English is a very precise language, and the British government certainly knew how to use it. The phrase was worked over many times, and reflected two key aspects of the status quo. First, the population of Palestine consisted at that time of "communities" of Jews, Muslim and Christian Arabs, Samaritans, Bahais, Circassians, Druze, Greeks, Turks, etc. There was no single and cohesive non-Jewish "national" or "political" group in existence. In fact, most Arabs considered themselves "Southern Syrians" or, as maintained by later Arab representatives to various British and international committees of inquiry, "members of the Arab nation." There were no "Palestinian Arabs" as a national or political entity. The only "national" group was the Jews who, until the establishment of the state of Israel, were known worldwide as the "Palestinians."

Second, and consequently, under the League of Nations mandate the "non-Jewish communities" were accorded their rightful "civil and religious" rights but not national or political rights. Recognizing "the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine," the mandate declared that the Jews—but not the other "communities"—have the right to a "national home" there. Iraq's King Feisal I, then representing all the Arabs, concurred with and agreed to this provision.

H. Z. BORNSTEIN
New York City

DOUGLAS J. FEITH writes:

After explaining why a new Palestinian state would endanger Israel and damage U.S. interests, Morton Klein states that the U.S. government should oppose the establishment of such a state. I agree.

H. Z. Bornstein's letter opens with a nice compliment, for which I am grateful. He then says that my description of the Balfour Declaration is not correct. His discussion of the Declaration is accurate (though Feisal at the time was an emir, not a king), but it does not explain what error I have committed. In any event, Mr. Bornstein usefully elaborates on the Declaration's concept of the rights of "non-Jewish communities." Anyone desiring an even more elaborate elaboration can find it in my article, "A Mandate for Israel," in the fall 1993 issue of the *National Interest*.

The Middle East 3: Saddam Hussein

TO THE EDITOR:

I enjoyed Robert Kagan's review of *A World Transformed* by George Bush and Brent Scowcroft [December 1998], and agree with most of his conclusions. But I must disagree strongly with his comments concerning the "failure to

Increase your hearing range by a factor of 10x, and get top-notch FM stereo reception besides, with...

PowerVox VII™ (Hearing Mate) with included FM Stereo Radio by RodelVox™ only $49.95*

**But read this ad for an even better deal!*

The instructions of *PowerVox VII™ (Hearing Mate)* caution you to have the control on "very low" when you first try it, because this instrument is truly amazing in its sound amplification—up to 10-times the actual level. You will be able to hear a pin drop 10 feet away, television, the movies, and the theater without any trouble, and every little sound in your surroundings. A walk through the woods will let you listen to birds, deer, squirrels, and even little crawly things. Tired of listening to the world or to people? Simply push the blue button and you will scan your choices of the FM stations in your area, in truly marvelous stereo fidelity. *PowerVox VII™ (Hearing Mate)* comes with belt/pocket clip and two AAA batteries.

We are the exclusive importers of *RodelVox™* electronic instruments and can therefore bring you this breakthrough product for just $49.95. **But we have an even better deal: *Buy two for just $99.90 and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!*** Hear things you've never heard before and participate in conversation and enjoy the movies and TV as you haven't for a long time. **AND,** listen to a first-class FM radio with brilliant tone and reception as a "bonus"! Order your *PowerVox VII™ (Hearing Mate) today!*

• PowerVox VII™ (Hearing Mate) *does for hearing what binoculars do for seeing. It brings everything 10-times closer.* PowerVox VII™ *is not a medical hearing device. It is a way for you to experience the world of sound around you—and to enjoy outstanding FM stereo reception.*

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER TOLL FREE (800) 797-7367 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. OR FAX YOUR ORDER TO: (415) 643-2818.

Please give order **#1076E590** for *PowerVox VII.* We need daytime phone number for all orders. Add $4.95 standard shipping/insurance charge (plus sales tax for CA delivery). You have 30-day refund and one-year warranty. We do not refund shipping charges.

For customer service, please call (415) 643-2810. For wholesale orders, call Chris Simpson at that same number.

since 1967
haverhills®
2360 Third St., San Francisco, CA 94107

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

finish off Saddam in Iraq." I do not think Mr. Kagan, like many others, understands what that would have meant.

Because there was no UN resolution for such an action, the U.S. and the British would have gone in alone. No Arab state would have gone forward. Moreover, taking Baghdad in order to get Saddam would have meant crossing the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, whose bridges had by then been destroyed by air attacks. How much bridging equipment did we have in the desert? And how would we have screened the several million people who would have been attempting to leave Baghdad, or cared for this large number of displaced civilians?

I willingly stipulate that 99 percent of the population of Baghdad (about 3,800,000 people) would want nothing more than to get out of the way of any fighting. That would leave about 38,000 armed troops, police, and security forces ready to inflict casualties on any attacker. A splendid little war with few casualties would have become a nightmare of mounting casualties on live TV.

And the continuing problem of location, location, location: just where was Saddam at any given time? Even today, we do not know where he is, though we sometimes find out where he has been. Why assume he was in Baghdad during Desert Storm?

Let us assume by some miracle that Saddam had been captured alive, or proved dead, early on. What then? The U.S. would have been stuck with governing Iraq. U.S. ground forces would have been spread very thin, with the need to get more troops there fast to organize infrastructure repair, reestablish the economy, govern an Arabic-speaking country without enough Arabic speakers in the U.S. force, etc. Bosnia, Haiti, and Somalia combined would be a picnic by comparison.

There is no easy solution to the Iraqi situation, just as there is no easy solution to many of the intractable problem areas of the world. The U.S. lacks the forces, not to mention the will, to do certain things, like removing Saddam Hussein. By design or dumb luck, George Bush saved his presidency, and possibly the world, from a series of military and political disasters by not going into Baghdad.

LARRY A. ALTERSITZ
Westville, New Jersey

ROBERT KAGAN writes:

I want to thank Larry A. Altersitz for his thoughtful letter. I agree with him that going into Baghdad in 1991 would not have been a picnic, but I think it could have been accomplished more easily than he suggests. For one thing, Mr. Altersitz is wrong when he claims that all the bridges across the Euphrates had been destroyed. How does he think the Iraqi Republican Guard was fleeing back to Baghdad at war's end? One route was across the Hammar Causeway, which the U.S. military had not destroyed, but there were others as well.

Whether Mr. Altersitz's hypothetical figure of 38,000 troops, police, and security personnel is too large or too small, it is a mistake to assume that the remaining Iraqi forces would have been able to mount a serious defense against the kind of power the U.S. was able to bring to bear. Mr. Altersitz's reasoning seems to be based on his assessment of what military capabilities Saddam was left with after the March ceasefire. But that assessment is misleading. Had the war not been ended prematurely, significant elements of the Republican Guard, rather than escaping intact, would have been captured or destroyed. Had the war not been ended prematurely, Shiite uprisings in the south would probably have succeeded in liberating that part of Iraq without much U.S. assistance. In fact, as the war came to an end, General Schwarzkopf stated that U.S. forces could have gone on to Baghdad. But, as we know, the decision in Washington was to end the ground war at a nice, neat 100 hours.

It is true, as Mr. Altersitz claims, that without a UN resolution supporting the removal of Saddam, U.S. and British forces would have "gone in alone." But these same forces had expelled the Iraqi army from Kuwait virtually alone, with the U.S. providing over 90 percent of the combat forces in Desert Storm. Thus it would have made no military difference if the U.S. had gone to Baghdad without a UN mandate. Nor is it clear that a decision to press forward would have been universally condemned either in Europe or in the Arab world. In any case, such condemnation could not have prevented the U.S. from accomplishing the goal of removing Saddam. And whether Saddam was captured on the first day, or even in the first weeks of a U.S. action, makes no difference. He could have run around the Iraqi desert all he liked. The fact is, the U.S. would have brought his armed forces to surrender and taken control in Baghdad.

The most persuasive argument Mr. Altersitz makes is that invading and occupying Iraq would have been a difficult and lengthy undertaking. I do not in any way want to minimize the problems involved, except to ask why it should be any harder to occupy an Arabic-speaking country without enough Arabic-speakers in one's forces than it was to occupy a Japanese-speaking country without, I daresay, many Japanese-speakers.

But the question is not whether occupying Iraq was a bad option, but whether it would have led to a situation that was better or worse than the one that now confronts us. This is a question Mr. Altersitz does not bother to ask. I would argue that if and when Saddam reemerges as a dominant player in the Middle East, this time fully armed with a variety of weapons of mass destruction, it will be clear that we would have been better off taking him out when we had the best chance of doing so.

Losing Vietnam

TO THE EDITOR:

In his review of Jeffrey Record's insightful book, *The Wrong War: Why We Lost in Vietnam* [January], Max Boot suggests that the Vietnam war was ours to win or lose. But it was not. We involved ourselves in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The pulse of the world from the heart of the nation.

Don't miss a thing. Subscribe to *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition*. And be privy to astute analysis of the policies, issues, debates and developments that make the world's pulse race.

You get the *inside* word here. Straight talk from the political pundits. In-depth coverage of the powers that be in Congress, the White House and abroad. Brilliant observations of the day's most significant political events. A roundup of rare, resourceful commentary on the Administration's every move.

This special weekly edition of the *Post* is read widely with the same high regard as our daily paper. It's full of exclusive reports and expert opinion to help you uncover the big-picture implications of today's agenda. It's written by individuals who are uniquely qualified to interpret Washington affairs with remarkable insight. Investigative reporters like Bob Woodward. Observers like Jim Hoagland and Robert Samuelson. Plus guest authorities in every field.

Week in and week out, *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition* keeps you abreast of our ever-swirling political scene. You get ...

■ **Capital Politics.** Penetrating assessments of the government's most controversial matters from the Pulitzer Prize-winning dean of American political analysts, David Broder.

■ **Capital Economics.** Venerable columnist Hobart Rowen tackles the tough issues. For instance: Why the U.S. alone mustn't serve as the world's police. What makes a free-trade agreement with Mexico prudent. Why OPEC is getting more for its product than it's worth. And more.

■ **The Political Pulse.** Puts your finger on the significance of shifts and surges in the parties, voters, ethics, elections, campaigns, referendums, committees, lobbies and policies of America.

Save 68% off the cover price!

■ **The Global Pulse.** Amazing stories and investigative reports from the diplomatic front. We identify and examine the ripple effects of events as far away as the Persian Gulf to Peru, the Soviet Union to South Africa.

■ **The Economic Pulse.** Forecasts and appraisals that probe beneath the surface of such weighty economic matters as energy, credit, the stock market, international finance, banking, labor, trade and more.

■ **Commentary.** Lively debate and provocative ideas from George Will, Tom Edsall, Dan Balz and other foremost political thinkers and writers.

■ **Editorials.** Trenchant views edited by Pulitzer Prize-winning *Post* editorial page editor, Meg Greenfield — plus our eye-opening op-ed page and the amusing visual observations of Herblock, the three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist.

■ **The Government Pulse.** Stay on top of new directions in law, health care, defense and the environment. For example: AIDS prevention campaigns and federal funding. Global warming's price tag. The potential for postwar terrorism. The perils of mandatory retirement. And more.

■ **Book World.** The most important new books are subjected to candid, stimulating reviews by well-known scholars, opinion leaders and best-selling authors themselves.

■ **What Americans Think.** Enjoy fascinating poll results on timely topics: Presidential approval ratings, civil rights trends, military matters, lifestyle habits and more.

■ **Science Lab.** Study the outcome of revealing reports, special research experiments and bold, new discoveries in such fields as psychology, medicine and conservation.

Indeed, The Washington Post National Weekly Edition *imparts a wealth of knowledge on politics, government, the economy, international affairs, business and industry. Go ahead. Read it for information. And use it to make decisions. Subscribe now and save 68% off the cover price. Complete and mail the coupon today.*

NATIONAL WEEKLY EDITION

The Washington Post

MAIL TO:
The Washington Post National Weekly Edition
228 East 45th Street, Suite 1515
New York, NY 10017

YES! Start my one-year subscription (52 issues) to *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition* for only $32 — I save $69.40 off the cover price.

❑ Payment enclosed *(payable to The Washington Post National Weekly Edition).*
❑ Bill me.
❑ Charge my ❑ AmEx. ❑ VISA ❑ MasterCard

Card No. _____ Expires _____

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____

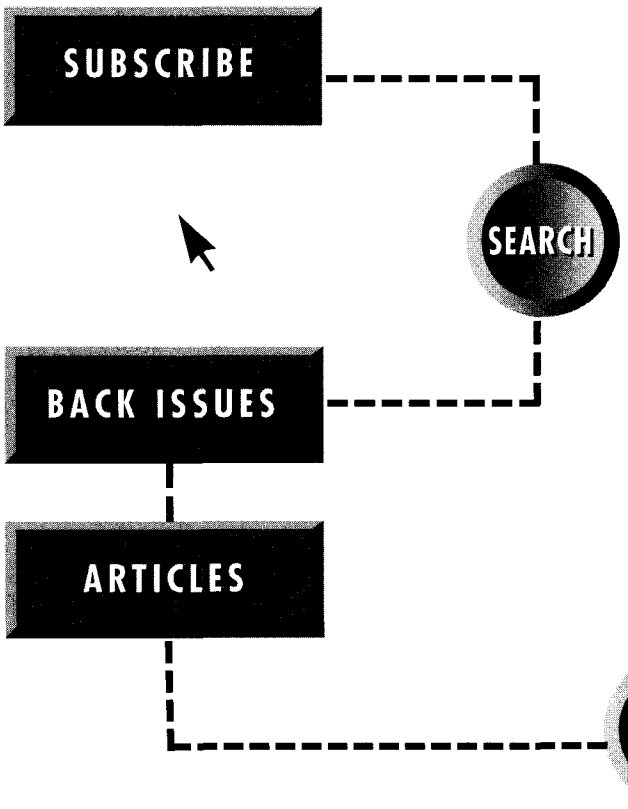
State _____ Zip _____ (1COME/JCOM98)

Limited time offer. Price good in continental U.S. only.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary is on the Internet.

Just type www.commentarymagazine.com and you're there.



Read Commentary from a different angle. On our regularly updated website, you will find the lead article of each month's issue, plus our famous Letters section, book reviews, and new articles by editor-at-large Norman Podhoretz as they appear.

And that's not all. A fascinating history vividly describes Commentary's 50-year odyssey across America's ideological and cultural landscape. A remarkable set of tributes, unavailable elsewhere, by William J. Bennett, William F. Buckley, Jr., Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, Henry Kissinger, Irving Kristol, Rupert Murdoch, Cynthia Ozick, A.M. Rosenthal, Ruth R. Wisse, James Q. Wilson, and others testify to the importance and influence of Commentary through the years.

User-friendly search engines help you navigate the various sections of the website and check previous issues. Links to other sites provide a ringside seat at the war of ideas. And so that no one need miss a single article, or the pleasures of reading the old-fashioned way, an online subscription form makes it easier than ever to receive Commentary at home or at the office, or to have it delivered to a friend.

www.commentarymagazine.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what essentially was a civil war—a war for the Saigon regime to win or lose. What was realistically winnable for U.S. involvement was an opportunity for the Saigon regime at least to hold its own against the ambitions of Hanoi—looking toward the ultimate possibility of a reasonable accommodation between those two regimes.

Even if we could have forced all the North Vietnamese troops back to Hanoi, this would not have been ultimate assurance of American victory. Having driven Ho Chi Minh's forces back across the 17th parallel, the United States surely would have declared victory and left—leaving unresolved the possibility of a resurgent North Vietnamese campaign against a corrupt Saigon regime less than adequately attentive to the needs of its people. Nor would we have been likely to return militarily to Vietnam, considering the massive economic, political, and other costs on our home front.

If the basic purpose of our involvement in the Vietnam war was to protect the rest of southern Asia against Soviet and Chinese ambitions in that region (remember the concern about "falling dominoes"?), we could easily and prudently have adopted a much different strategy—perhaps an initiative like the Marshall Plan to address the area's economic, social, and political problems.

In 1966 (I think it was), Senator George Aiken of Vermont, commenting on the Vietnam war, proposed that we declare victory and leave. I am not sure how he rationalized this proposition. Maybe what he had in mind was that the U.S. had won what was winnable for our country under the circumstances—namely, an opportunity for a properly motivated and properly run government in Saigon to hold its own against Hanoi's efforts to subvert it. In view of the impressive record of our armed forces at that stage of the war, he was probably much closer to the approach that should have been taken than most critiques of the Vietnam war have been in the decades that followed.

DAVID J. STEINBERG
Alexandria, Virginia

MAX BOOT writes:

David J. Steinberg expresses a common and perfectly respectable viewpoint. To see its shortcomings, try substituting "Korea" for "Vietnam," "Seoul" for "Saigon," and so forth. The point is that all of the arguments Mr. Steinberg applies against seeking victory in Vietnam were equally applicable to the Korean war. Both were "civil wars," insofar as Koreans were fighting Koreans and Vietnamese fighting Vietnamese. And in both cases, once U.S. troops had driven the invaders across the international border, they left in place a "corrupt" regime "less than adequately attentive to the needs of its people." Yet in Korea that regime evolved into a prosperous democracy over the last several decades, under the protective wing of a continuing American troop presence. It is hard to see why we could not have followed a similar model in Vietnam, if only our military strategy there had been as successful as in Korea.

Terrorism & Slavery

TO THE EDITOR:

Joshua Muravchik ["Terrorism at the Multiplex," January] shows how American Arab and Muslim lobbies use the charge of "Islamophobia" to silence those who would draw attention to Arab or Islamic terrorism. These groups have resorted to a similar tactic in defending Islamic regimes that enslave black Africans.

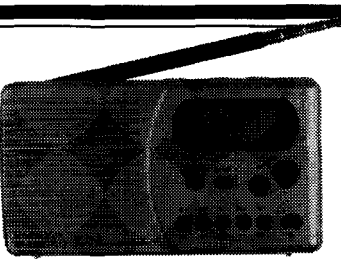
In Mauritania, slavery never ended, and more than 100,000 blacks serve Arabo-Berber masters. They are bought, sold, given as wedding gifts, and inherited. Moreover, these black slaves are Muslims, in violation of Islamic law, which forbids the enslavement of fellow Muslims.

To the east, the government of Sudan employs

A breakthrough in audio technology...

MR-318T™ AM/FM/TV Stereo Personal Digital Radio only $69.95*

**But read this ad for an even better deal!*



There is absolutely nothing like it. This outstanding personal receiver fits in your shirt-pocket or fits inconspicuously on your desk or night table. It's packed with features that give you crisp reception over the entire AM and FM bands and the audio portions of all VHF TV channels—2 to 13. Here are some of the other great features of this breakthrough personal digital radio:

• *The MR-318T works on two AA-batteries (included). It measures only 5 x 2.5 inches and weighs less than six ounces. Fidelity is astonishing! The maker of the MR-318T receiver is one of the world's leaders in the production of advanced radio equipment.*

- PLL Synthesized Tuning
- Built-in Speaker
- State-of-the-Art Design
- Automatic Scanning
- Headphones Included
- Last-Tuned Station Retained
- Keylock Function
- External AC/DC Power Jack
- 25 Memory Presets: 10 AM, 10 FM, 5 TV
- Low-Battery Indicator
- Batteries Included

We are one of the selected distributors in the United States of this advanced receiver and are therefore able to bring it to you at the almost unbelievable price of just $69.95. **But we have an even better deal:** ***Buy two for just $139.90 and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!*** Get "shirtpocket" AM/FM reception as you never had before. Catch the audio portion of your favorite TV show, wherever you are: watch the late TV show without disturbing your partner; listen to the commentator when you watch the ball game or any sporting event—and much more.

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER TOLL FREE (800) 797-7367 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. OR FAX YOUR ORDER TO: (415) 643-2818.

Please give order **#1074E592.** We need daytime phone # for all orders. Add $4.95 standard shipping/insurance charge (plus sales tax for CA delivery). You have 30-day refund and one-year warranty. We do not refund shipping charges.

For customer service, please call (415) 643-2810. For wholesale orders, call Chris Simpson at that same number.

since 1967 **haverhills®**

2360 Third St., San Francisco, CA 94107

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

slave raids in its genocidal campaign against the country's Christians and tribalists. Arab militias armed by the regime storm African villages, shoot the men, and abduct the women and children. According to the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, and scores of independent journalists, these people are kept by the militiamen or sold.

This issue was at first ignored by black leaders, women's groups, progressive churches, human-rights activists, and liberal journalists—the very people one thinks care most about such things; but a persistent grassroots campaign on behalf of the slaves has suddenly gained traction. One would have hoped that organizations representing the interests of Arab and Muslim Americans would be joining the abolitionists. Instead, these groups—most notably, the Committee on American-Islamic Relations—have forcefully defended the slaving Arab regimes and bitterly attacked their critics, charging them with "anti-Muslim stereotyping" and "cultural bias."

Leaders of the Arab/Muslim lobby cannot pose as mainstream American human-rights activists while defending slavers. It is an enormous historic error for Arab and Muslim Americans to let their most prominent public organizations be apologists for an evil America knows all too well. If "Islamophobia" is a problem, it is generated in part by the deeds of the ruling elites in Sudan and Mauritania who commit barbarities in the name of Islam, and by the presence of their supporters in our midst.

As these matters become more widely known, the American Arab and Muslim communities will no doubt find leaders who can represent their true interests. In the meantime, thousands upon thousands of Africans remain in bondage.

CHARLES JACOBS
President, American Anti-Slavery Group, Inc.
Somerville, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Joshua Muravchik's insightful review of *The Siege* correctly points out that although ordinary Arab Americans should not be "tarred with the brush of others' . . . terrorism," their spokesmen have been too "equivocal" about acknowledging and condemning Hamas and Hezbollah terrorists. Mr. Muravchik delicately adds that he does not wish to "suggest that terrorism is endemic . . . doctrinally to Islam."

In the mainstream American press, frank discussion of the real influence of religion on group behavior is taboo. Noticeably avoided is the possibility that certain fundamentalist Islamic beliefs are inherently flawed and have a harmful influence. For although the more liberal aspects of Islam are obviously appealing to millions of peaceful Muslims in democracies around the world, something at the core of Islam seems to have a pernicious influence on fundamentalist believers, who find within its sacred scriptures and traditions justification for such notions as death sentences (*fatwahs*) against critics, and *jihad* ("holy war").

Islam has been an expansive religion for almost 1500 years. It is important for the West to acknowledge that fundamentalist terrorists are motivated by a uniquely militant aspect of their faith that some other Muslims apparently have difficulty condemning.

LAWRENCE I. BONCHEK
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Parents & Peers

TO THE EDITOR:

In commenting on *An Unconventional Family* by Sandra Lipsitz Bem ["Among the Gender Benders," January], Wendy Shalit notes that despite the bizarre child-rearing practices of this feminist author, the children basically came out okay, unscarred by the process. What better confirmation could there be of Judith Rich Harris's thesis in *The Nurture Assumption: Why Children Turn Out the Way They Do* (see Mary Eberstadt's article "What are Parents For?," in the December 1998 COMMENTARY)? Fortunately, genes and peers triumph over the best intentions of feminist parents.

RICHARD M. KUNTZ
Chicago, Illinois
MARK VENEZIA
Boston, Massachusetts

Remembering Paris

TO THE EDITOR:

This is a brief note to thank you for the extraordinary intellectual pleasure afforded by André Aciman's "The Last Time I Saw Paris" [January], the words of which it is an honor to read.

TALILA GAFTER
New York City

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE BENEFITS OF THE JOURNAL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY.

BUSINESS NEWS YOU CAN USE WITH CONFIDENCE EVERY BUSINESS DAY.

The Wall Street Journal, the world's most trusted source of news and business information, is ready to work for you every business day. To help you make better decisions. More confident decisions. Whatever area of business you're involved in – from marketing and management to technology and finance – you'll find The Wall Street Journal indispensable to your business and personal success.

Free Personal Finance Guide
With "Decision Maker" Software!

The Wall Street Journal Guide to Understanding Personal Finance is what managing money is all about. This remarkable 176-page reference book gives you sound advice and information on the best ways to handle everything from buying a car and financing a home to investing for college and planning for your future. The guide and its easy-to-use software retail for $18.95 but they're yours FREE with your paid subscription to the Journal.

Take advantage of this great offer! Get 13 weeks of The Wall Street Journal and the valuable Personal Finance Guide and software – all for only $49! Mail the coupon now. Or call toll-free 800-322-3414.

FREE PERSONAL FINANCE GUIDE AND COMPANION DISK.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
228 East 45th Street, Suite 1515
New York, NY 10017

Send me:
❑ 13 weeks for $49. ❑ 26 weeks for $89.

Send my FREE Guide with disk for:
❑ Windows ❑ Mac.
(For new paid subscribers only.)

❑ Check enclosed ❑ Bill me
(Payable to The Wall Street Journal.)

Charge to:
❑ AmEx ❑ Diners Club ❑ Discover ❑ MC ❑ Visa

Card No. Expires

Signature

Name (please print)

Address Suite/Apt

City

State Zip

Limited time offer – good in continental U.S. only.
©1998 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All rights reserved.

1COME/3UATW

DOWJONES

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If you knew what they know, would you do what they do?

More than any other single force on earth, America's foreign policy will determine what kind of world we and our children live in.

And every one of us can influence that policy. That's what the nonprofit, nonpartisan Foreign Policy Association is all about: working to develop the kind of informed public opinion that will help our government make enlightened, responsible foreign policy decisions.

Last year alone, more than 250,000 Americans across the nation—in discussion groups, classrooms and community centers—participated in our *Great Decisions* program.

The *Great Decisions* book provides objective background on eight key foreign policy issues. Discussions help you form your views; you express them on opinion ballots, which FPA presents to Washington officials.

FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION 1918

To find out more, call us at (212) 481-8100. Or write to Foreign Policy Association, Department A, 470 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016. Donations are tax deductible.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary
April 1999

Is There a "Third Way"?

Elliott Abrams

"My fellow Americans, we have found a third way."

The exultant words are President Bill Clinton's, in his 1998 State of the Union address. Coincidentally, others have recently claimed to find the same elusive object. With the electoral victory of the Social Democratic party (SPD) in Germany last year, most of the major Western countries are now governed by newly refurbished parties of the Left, and a historical pattern has been discerned. Where once Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Helmut Kohl hailed the benefits of economic competition and sponsored privatization schemes, now Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, and Gerhard Schroeder promise to combine the efficiency of free-market capitalism with the old-fashioned security and solidarity associated with government-centered liberalism in its heyday.

It is certainly a formula for winning elections. The question is whether it is anything more than that.

Behind the idea of the third way is a long history, probably as long as the history of revolutionary Marxism to which it was, in the first place, a reaction. Thus, the rise of social-democratic movements in Europe in the decades around the turn of the century represented an effort to hold on to the radically egalitarian ideals of Communism while jettisoning its demand for the transformation of society by violence. From time to time, it was even announced that the golden mean had been located: Marquis Childs's famous 1936 book, *Sweden: The Middle Way*, discovered in that country's welfare state exactly the proper compromise between industrial capitalism and a redistributionist philosophy of government.

If "third-way" thinking in Europe was essentially a phenomenon of the Left, a refracted version of it found a home in Christian Democratic parties of the Right. For such parties—as for the Vatican—softening the sharp edges of capitalism had long been a desideratum. They therefore often lent support to programs aimed at splitting the difference, as it were, between capitalism and socialism.

Indeed, most Center-Right parties in Europe would make their peace with the modern welfare state long before their counterparts on the Left made theirs with capitalism and the free market. The British Labor party, which officially espoused socialism in 1918, could not bring itself to drop that commitment until the 1990's. Similarly recalcitrant were the German SPD and the other major parties of Europe's democratic Left. To these socialists and their sympathizers, abandoning their ultimate vision—the defeat of capitalist "greed" and the ushering-in of a classless millennium—seemed not only wrong but suicidal.

But then came the repeated victories of Thatch-

Elliott Abrams *is president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

er, Kohl, and conservative parties all over the Continent, followed by the implosion and collapse of the Soviet empire and with it the long-delayed discrediting of socialism as an organizing political idea. If Europe's Left were to recover, new approaches—or at least new slogans—were essential. In the 1990's the very term "socialist," once a proud badge of honor, had become a liability. And so, last year, the SPD's election manifesto proclaimed: "We are the new German centrist party."

IN THE United States, *mutatis mutandis*, the story has not been wholly dissimilar. Of course, socialism, revolutionary or otherwise, never exercised a strong appeal in this country; but socialist ideals and sentiments nevertheless penetrated deeply into the attitudes of liberals and left-wing Democrats. As for Republicans and conservatives, they, like their counterparts in Europe, accepted the welfare state and government intervention in the economy long before many liberals would surrender their hostility to private enterprise. Indeed, for decades the historic role of Republicans in office seemed to be to consolidate, with modifications, the big-government programs put into place by Democrats.*

From 1932 to 1964, with the exception of the Eisenhower years, big-government Democrats won every presidential election and kept a tight grip on Congress. But in the late 1960's their hold over national politics began to loosen. Aside from the post-Watergate election of 1976 that brought Jimmy Carter to the White House, the party was defeated in every presidential contest from 1968 to 1988. It lost the Senate for the first time in decades in 1980, and finally lost control of the House in 1994.

The story of this reversal has often been told: in essence, the Democrats moved further Left while the country was standing still or moving Right. Riven by the controversy over the Vietnam war, the Democratic party repudiated the tough brand of liberalism personified by Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey and began to field candidates—George McGovern, Michael Dukakis, Walter Mondale—whose queasiness over the use of American power abroad was matched by an indulgent attitude toward the forces tearing American society apart at home, from rising crime rates to the political revolutionism of the New Left and the moral revolutionism of the counterculture. The party's electoral base was also weakening: by the late 1970's, half the American population had some college education and the blue-collar electorate that had provided the Democrats with victory after victory was turning middle-class.

In the meantime, the Right was winning not only elections but arguments. Milton Friedman, whose ideas the academic establishment had once considered beyond the pale, won the Nobel Prize for Economics. The neoconservative movement hurled salvo after salvo at the political, social, and cultural views of the Left, effectively ending its half-century-long monopoly on American intellectual life. In 1978 came the "tax revolt" symbolized by Proposition 13, the California initiative that slashed property taxes and restricted the ability of local governments to restore revenues by passing other taxes.

Within the Democratic party itself, the nomination of George McGovern in 1972 had shocked the more centrist forces into founding the Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM), led by figures like Jeane Kirkpatrick, Ben Wattenberg, and the late Senator Henry M. Jackson. CDM had little influence within the ruling structures of the party, or within the administration of Jimmy Carter. But the crushing defeats of Carter in 1980 and of Walter Mondale in 1984, both at the hands of Ronald Reagan, awakened many more Democrats to the need for change and led to the formation of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), whose members included the then-governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton. The search for a third way was on.

THE NAME given to this third way was, at first, "neoliberalism." As expounded in the pages of magazines like the *New Republic* and the *Washington Monthly*, neoliberalism amounted to a Democratic version of neoconservatism. For the first time, it was acknowledged that the social policies embraced by liberals had failed to solve—and had sometimes worsened—the very problems they were designed to alleviate. According to the DLC's publication the *New Democrat*, history had rendered "two verdicts" that "many on the Left have been slow to acknowledge":

> First, capitalism is the best economic system yet devised for creating growth and efficiently allocating resources, and second, two-parent families nurturing such values as faith, work, personal responsibility, civility, and openness to new ideas are the best social units devised for raising children.

* It was not for nothing that, in 1984, Congressman Newt Gingrich would describe Bob Dole, then the Republican leader of the Senate, as "the tax collector for the welfare state."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The trick was to wrest these winning ideas from their natural home on the Right and claim them for liberalism. It took a decade for the maneuver to work itself out, but eventually, thanks to the political genius of Bill Clinton, and with the tacit connivance of the fractured post-Reagan Republicans, it did.

To be fair, the maneuver was not entirely cynical, nor have its consequences been negligible. Although Republicans and conservatives have often expressed outrage at the way liberals have appropriated their analyses, their rhetoric, and their programs—and then beaten them at the polls—some liberals, at least, really did learn from the failures of the past and were willing to rethink beliefs that for many had amounted to a kind of religious faith. One such belief had to do with welfare. When President Clinton eventually signed the welfare-reform bill of 1996, a bill initiated and pushed through by Republicans, he and some like-minded "New Democrats" were formally acknowledging that the system their party had invented, expanded, and defended was a moral and economic failure of historic proportions. The cooperation of "New Democrats" has similarly facilitated other social initiatives based on market mechanisms, competition, and efficiency in the use of public funds on both the federal and local levels.

But if the third way has not been entirely a cynical maneuver, it has certainly been calculated to reap the maximum political advantage for the Democratic party. Toward that end, the wonderful vagueness of the term itself has been of immense utility, conjuring up as it does some magical midpoint between Left and Right that does not obligate the individual invoking it to be very clear about specifics. When Clinton proclaimed in his 1998 State of the Union message that "we" had found a third way, and in doing so had "moved past the sterile debate between those who say government is the enemy and those who say government is the answer," he was exploiting that same wonderful vagueness. As one observer in England wrote of Prime Minister Tony Blair's version of the same formula, "it is a form of political product differentiation without really knowing what the product is."

But there is more going on here than mere "product differentiation," and Tony Blair put his finger on what it is. Speaking as the leader of the British opposition in 1995, he said:

> If—and I accept this is the real challenge—the Left can liberate itself from outdated preconceptions, strip its essential values out from the means of their application relevant to another part of their history, then a modern Left-of-Center is the best able to provide security amid change.

Commenting sardonically on these remarks, the *Economist* focused on the "arresting" notion that a political party "can reverse its policy ideas but cling to its underlying values." Arresting, the notion truly is. But it is also the very essence of the claim made by proponents of the third way: namely, that, whatever unfortunate consequences may have flowed from the Left's values, those values remain beyond reproach—and morally superior to those of the Left's opponents. To put it slightly differently, the Left deserves to govern not because of what it has done, or even what it will do, but because it *is* the Left—i.e., the owner and sole proprietor of a social conscience. As the *Economist* went on: "Policies that were base when they sprang from Tory values (greed, worship of the market) become suddenly precious when reprocessed through the alchemy of Labor's higher purpose (altruism, community)."

Hence the next step in the politics of the third way: abusing conservatives and Republicans for *their* alleged values even as conservative remedies are being stolen and (to use the *Economist*'s word) "reprocessed." This abuse has been a constant feature in the writing of third-way ideologues and in the rhetoric of third-way politicians. (Republicans, Clinton averred flatly in June 1998, are just "not concerned" about America's social problems.) It has been spectacularly successful as a political weapon, most dramatically in the White House campaign to demonize Newt Gingrich as a heartless brute at the very moment the ideas Gingrich championed were being incorporated into White House initiatives.

In light of the damage done to American society by liberal ideas, one might argue that it is worth paying the price in cynical partisan warfare for the sake of a more centrist Democratic party. And few would dispute that by at least some measures, the party has indeed moved center-ward in recent years. But only by some measures, and then mostly by dint of the personal prestidigitation of the "triangulating" Clinton. By other measures, the heart of the party remains on the Left, and talk of a third way serves only to disguise the fact.

Take big government—whose "era," Clinton famously announced in his 1996 State of the Union message, "is over." In 1999, both in fact and in theory, it is back. Clinton's new budget, adumbrated in this year's message, is swimming with new federal

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

programs, including a proposal for the government to enter the stock market and buy billions in shares in order to shore up Social Security—an unprecedented move to increase the power of the state over the economy that has been condemned by economists from every point on the political spectrum.

Federal receipts as a percentage of GDP have risen during every year of the Clinton presidency, and have already reached their highest percentage point since 1944. Americans are now paying more in taxes than their government—even this bloated government, which most Americans think is too big and too inefficient—needs in order to do what it is doing. (The very definition of a budget surplus.) On this issue, there is no third way: either there will be tax cuts, or the percentage of GDP going into federal taxes will continue to rise. Rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding, the Clinton administration has made its choice: prudent as it may have been to advocate parsimony in the era of budget deficits, today, with the Treasury awash in revenue, big government—a/k/a tax-and-spend—is back with a vengeance.

Nor, in retrospect, could it really be otherwise. Even for the most ardent proponents of the third way, government activism was never a real issue. Writing in 1990 in the house organ of the DLC, Elaine Kamarck, later a senior policy adviser to Vice President Al Gore, argued that

> the core Democratic philosophy of activist government . . . needs to go back to the drawing board . . . not because people don't want or need an activist government but because the voters believe, with some justification, that big government as the Democrats think of it doesn't work.

The task, then, was not to abandon big government but, in the phrase soon to become associated with the Vice President, to "reinvent" it—or, as Clinton himself would put it in his 1998 speech to the DLC, to make government "more active, more effective, less expensive." The sequence of the three terms is revealing, as is the patent impossibility of reconciling the first term with the last.

It is important to be clear about what the "core Democratic philosophy" entails. The ever-candid Tony Blair has written that "the grievous 20th-century error of the fundamentalist Left was the belief that the state could replace civil society and thereby advance freedom." Despite efforts by New Democrats and third-wayers to convince us that this error has once and for all been corrected, it has not.

Contemporary liberalism has rarely addressed itself to society. It has always been about government—about building its power, about enhancing its reach. And so it remains. The very terms in which third-wayers speak about America betray this bias. Even as they acknowledge that their past enthusiasm for government intervention may have led them to overlook the way people actually live their lives in society, they continue to speak of the country less in terms of its parents and children, its community associations, its churches and synagogues, its voluntary organizations, or its businesses than in terms of voters and politicians, taxpayers and bureaucrats. About the ability of politicians and bureaucrats to meet the "needs" of those voters and taxpayers, one rarely if ever hears a word of doubt.

WHAT IDEOLOGY justifies, politics sustains. Third way or no third way, today's Democratic party draws its electoral support, energy, and money from a coalition that looks to government to direct and remake society. Publications of the Progressive Policy Institute, the DLC's think tank, may feature sharp critiques of the current state of public education, for example, but one searches in vain for any expression of support for school vouchers, the logical extension of those selfsame criticisms. The reason is ideological and political at once: ideologically, citizens are not to be entrusted with decision-making power because they are likely to make the wrong decisions; politically, the teachers' unions whose support is critical to the Democratic party are vehemently opposed to school choice.

As the education example suggests, the truly bloody battlelines in American politics today tend to be cultural rather than economic. On any number of these broadly cultural issues, ranging from extreme environmentalism to gay marriage to multiculturalism to partial-birth abortion, ideology and coalition politics once again conjoin to propel third-wayers far from the center. Advocates of these causes share a mindset, and they also share a reliance on government power to help bring about the changes in American life they demand. Whatever a truly third-way perspective might dictate on these issues, on hardly any of them has it been possible for Clinton to give even an inch—witness his adamancy on affirmative action, his veto of a small school-voucher experiment in the District of Columbia, and his repeated vetoes of legislation restricting partial-birth abortion. In the wake of the impeachment struggle, during which the groups most identified with such issues were his staunchest backers, the President is tied more tightly to them than ever before.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There is a related subject here. Just as third-wayers are deaf to the priority of society over government, so are they blind to the issue of sexual morality. This is something that goes beyond President Clinton's misconduct in office, and even beyond the Democrats' unwillingness to punish him. The moral corruption that bothers most Americans—the coarseness of movies and television and popular music, the spread of pornography, the sexualization of children—is a direct outgrowth of ideas of personal "liberation" once embraced or condoned by many liberals. Given the dependence of today's Democratic party on Hollywood money, let alone Hollywood sensibilities, it is understandable enough that on these matters, the silence of third-wayers has been deafening.

Finally, one cannot but notice another striking lacuna in the thought of third-wayers: exactly how their approach is supposed to function in the realm of foreign policy. Given who most of them are, and where they come from, that too is understandable. Children of the 60's, they seem alternately suspicious of and nonplussed by the American military; in none of their voluminous literature will one find advocacy of increased military spending or for that matter of American military superiority. As confident as they are about the uses of government power at home, they are commensurately skittish about the possible use of national power abroad. And it shows: from Somalia to Iraq, from North Korea to Kosovo, American indecision has been amply on display in the last years, and so have the consequences of that indecision in a decline of military morale, a dangerous slippage in preparedness, and the emergence of what experts darkly call a "hollow army." As Ronald Reagan well understood, there is no middle ground between strength and weakness, between greatness and decline.

Can one draw a balance sheet? The third way does reflect, on the part of some liberals and Democrats, a felt need to accommodate, however grudgingly, the conservative reforms of the 1980's, as well as a greater degree of pragmatism about which government programs work and which do not. It is to be welcomed on that account, and greatly preferred to what preceded it. But on the most consequential divisions in American life, from the size and purpose of government itself to the nature of our civic and familial arrangements, the third way represents not a departure from outmoded and discredited ideas but at best a makeover, at worst a deception. Unfortunately, the further one gets from the think tanks and the speeches, and the closer one gets to the real politics and policies of the Democratic party, the less there is that is really new—except, for the moment, the election results.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Pope, the Church, and the Jews

Robert S. Wistrich

OVER THE past four decades, the attitude of the Catholic Church toward Judaism and the Jews has undergone a sea change. On the theological level, the decisive event was the Second Vatican Council, which in 1965 finally lifted the collective charge of deicide against the Jewish people, reversing the longstanding Augustinian view that the Jews would eternally bear the mark of Cain. But of no less importance has been the current Pope's personal commitment to reconciliation. Since his election in 1978, John Paul II has repeatedly broken new ground in relations with the Jewish community, becoming the first bishop of Rome to visit a synagogue in the Eternal City, establishing diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the state of Israel, and emphatically denouncing anti-Semitism.

Indeed, no other Pope has had so direct an experience of Jewish life and suffering. As a youth growing up in the small Polish town of Wadowice, Karol Wojtyla (as John Paul II was then named) counted Jews among his closest friends and came to know the rhythms of Jewish observance and family life. He would later witness firsthand the Nazi murder of Poland's Jews. Speaking of his hometown in 1994, John Paul II remarked that it was "from there that I have this attitude of community, of communal feelings about the Jews." These recollections inform his repeated reminder to Catholics that Europe's Jews were exterminated "only for the reason that they were Jews"—a bitter and sorrowful truth that seems to have become part of his most intimate credo.

Against this record of institutional progress and personal sympathy, however, must be set the Church's less than felicitous handling of a range of issues related to the Holocaust. The death camp at Auschwitz has been a particular source of contentiousness, first with the establishment there of a Carmelite convent in the 1980's and more recently with the proliferation on its grounds of memorial crosses erected by militant local Catholics. Both episodes have been seen as efforts to reorder historical truth—comparatively few Catholics were killed at the camp—and, perhaps worse, to appropriate the millions of Jewish dead into the sacred drama of Christian martyrdom. Similarly controversial was John Paul II's canonization of Father Maximillian Kolbe, a Polish Catholic priest who had opposed the Nazis but was also the founder of a viciously anti-Semitic newspaper in prewar Poland. Nor were matters helped by the Pope's canonization last October of Edith Stein, a

ROBERT S. WISTRICH *holds the Neuberger chair in modern Jewish history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and is currently guest professor at Brandeis University and the Harvard Center for Jewish Studies. His many books include* Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred, Who's Who in Nazi Germany, *and the forthcoming* Demonizing the Other: Antisemitism, Racism, and Xenophobia *(Harwood Academic Publishers).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

German Jewish intellectual who converted to Catholicism and became a nun but was nonetheless consigned by the Nazis as a Jew to Auschwitz, where she perished in the gas chamber.

If these incidents seemed to reveal a lack of sensitivity to Jewish feelings, let alone to the separate integrity of Jewish history, no less disappointing has been the Church's effort to come to terms with its own actions during the Holocaust. The Vatican's first authoritative statement on this subject, a fourteen-page document that had been over a decade in the making, was issued a little over a year ago under the title *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*. Clearly to the dismay of Church authorities, however, it was greeted with only lukewarm appreciation by Jewish organizations, which, while hailing the Church's genuine desire for self-examination and repentance, faulted its unwillingness to confront unpleasant truths.

Although this episode has attracted its share of attention in the general press, *We Remember* itself has so far received relatively little in the way of sustained analysis. But both the document and the response to it—as well as the ongoing response to the response—offer a good barometer of the Church's evolving relationship with the Jewish people.

MAKING ITS sympathies clear from the start, *We Remember* refers to the murder of European Jewry as the Shoah—the Hebrew word meaning "catastrophe." The event, declares the Vatican statement, was an "unspeakable tragedy," one that "can never be forgotten." Moreover, the document continues, although the obligation to recall and understand the Shoah falls upon everyone, it is felt with particular urgency by the Church, not only because of its "very close bonds of spiritual kinship with the Jewish people" but also because of its "remembrance of the injustices of the past."

With respect to those injustices, *We Remember* is forthright. The Shoah took place, it acknowledges, "in countries of longstanding Christian civilization," countries where anti-Jewish sentiment and practices were common. Over the centuries, the Jews of Europe had faced "generalized discrimination," expulsions, forced conversions, and scapegoating that at times resulted in "violence, looting, even massacres." Nor was this hostility somehow accidental to Christianity. Behind much of it, the Vatican statement observes, were "erroneous and unjust interpretations of the New Testament" concerning the "alleged culpability" of the Jews for the death of Jesus.

But then, during the 19th century, things changed. The anti-Jewish animus, formerly based in religion, mutated, according to the Vatican statement, into a set of prejudices whose origins were sociological or political, springing from "a false and exacerbated nationalism" and from anxiety about Jewish "influence." Emerging at roughly the same time, and of particular importance for later developments, were certain "pseudoscientific" ideas about superior and inferior peoples, ideas that "denied the unity of the human race."

What Nazism added to this virulent mix, *We Remember* continues, was a totalitarian ideology that assigned an "absolute status" to the German state and people. Refusing "to acknowledge any transcendent reality as the . . . criterion of moral good," the Nazis saw fit not only to attempt to destroy the Jews—witnesses "to the one God and the Law of the Covenant"—but also to reject Christianity and the Church. The Shoah, in short, "was the work of a thoroughly modern neopagan regime" whose racist anti-Semitism must be sharply distinguished from the anti-Judaism "of which, unfortunately, Christians also have been guilty."

Indeed, in order to emphasize the saliency during the Shoah itself of the Church's "constant teaching" concerning the "equal dignity of all races and peoples," *We Remember* cites several Church leaders for their acts of resistance and rescue. Three German churchmen are singled out for their opposition to National Socialism, as are Pius XI and Pius XII, the two Popes who held office during the Nazi era. Pius XII in particular is praised for what he did "personally or through his representatives to save hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives."

At the same time, *We Remember* also concedes that many members of the Church in Nazi-occupied Europe did not do everything in their power to help the persecuted Jews. "The spiritual resistance and concrete action of other Christians," it laments, "was not that which might have been expected from Christ's followers." Appalled though these ordinary Catholics may have been by the assault on their Jewish neighbors, they "were not strong enough to raise their voices in protest." For the "errors and failures" of its "sons and daughters," the Church proclaims its deep regret, describing its present statement, in another echo of Hebrew sources, as an act of *teshuvah*—repentance.

Finally, looking to the future of Jewish-Christian relations, *We Remember* concludes by urging Catholics to attend both to the "Hebrew roots of their faith" and to the "salutary warning" of the Shoah: that "the spoiled seeds of anti-Judaism and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

anti-Semitism must never again be allowed to take root in any human heart."

WHATEVER ONE'S final judgment of this *mea culpa*, one cannot but commend both its tone and its basic aims. Throughout, the long history of Christian persecution of the Jews is discussed with candor and in a spirit of contrition. As for the Shoah itself, it is evoked in terms that leave no doubt as to the Church's recognition of its horror, as well as its repudiation of any effort to deny or trivialize the event. (In the United States, Patrick J. Buchanan may be the best-known Catholic guilty of this relativizing tendency.) Nor is there any mistaking the sincerity of John Paul II when in a letter accompanying *We Remember* he declares his hope that the statement will help to avert any future recurrence of "the unspeakable iniquity of the Shoah."

But there is a good deal more to be said about the moral and historical worth of *We Remember*—and much of it, unfortunately, is not especially flattering to the Church's declared aspirations.

To begin at the most general level, it is impossible to accept the Vatican's effort to distinguish as sharply as this document does between Christian anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism. While it is true that the factors cited in *We Remember*—from nationalism to race "science" to inflated ideas of Jewish influence—did play an important role in the emergence of anti-Semitic ideologies in the 19th century, these ideologies presupposed a cultural framework that had been fashioned by centuries of medieval Christian theology, ecclesiastical policy, and popular religious myth.

A partial list of the relevant precedents—none of which makes an appearance in *We Remember*—would include the demonization of the Jews by the early Church fathers; the vast library of medieval polemical literature known as "against the Jews" (*adversus judaeos*); and the endlessly promulgated images of the Jew as Satan, anti-Christ, Judas, or Ahasuerus, the "Wandering Jew" condemned to eternal exile for his deadly sins. A number of the Holy See's legislative actions against the Jews have also echoed fatefully down the ages. One thinks in particular of the order issued by Pope Innocent III and the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) requiring Jews to wear distinctive garb and yellow badges, and of the decision by a succession of 16th-century Popes to confine the Jews of Rome and the papal states to ghettos.

There is, of course, some validity to *We Remember*'s claim that Nazism, by virtue of its "neopaganism," stood outside the Christian tradition. Hitler was contemptuous of the "effeminate pity-ethics" of Judeo-Christianity, which he saw as completely antithetical to the Nazi movement's "heroic belief in God in nature, God in our people, in our destiny, in our blood." Surveying the Third Reich, one easily finds evidence of this primitivistic cult of vitality and struggle: in Nazi art and architecture, in the ideology of the Hitler Youth, in the determination of Heinrich Himmler to cultivate a perfect warrior-race of blonde, blue-eyed Germanic heroes, and in the work of *völkisch* sectarians like Alfred Rosenberg, who dreamed of a new Germanic religion.

Pagans though they may have been, however, the Nazis did not hesitate to draw upon Christian rhetoric and symbolism to bolster their new political religion—and nowhere more so than in their war against the Jews. Christian motifs abound in a typical anti-Semitic rag like Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer*. One finds there the crucifixion ("Golgotha has not yet been revenged"), the image of the eternally cursed people, the usurious Jew squeezing the poor peasant dry, the Jew as the "devil in human disguise" and as the ritual murderer of Christian children. Nazism radicalized these popular stereotypes drawn from the Christian Middle Ages, but it did not invent them.*

The Vatican document is by no means mistaken to argue that the ideology of the Third Reich was profoundly anti-Christian; nor is it wrong to draw a distinction between Christian and Nazi anti-Semitism. But the difference is hardly absolute. It is, rather, as Milton Himmelfarb once observed, like that between an uncomfortable fever and a lethal one—they are two variants of the same sickness.

STILL MORE troubling is *We Remember*'s account of the Church's own behavior during the Shoah. By the document's lights, the Catholic hierarchy, from the Holy See on down, answered the Nazi war against the Jews with principled and consistent opposition.

There were in fact a number of brave churchmen who set radiant personal examples amid the general darkness. One can point to Archbishop Saliège of Toulouse, Cardinal Gerlier of Lyon, and Bishop Pierre-Marie Théas of Montauban, whose statements against the deportation of France's Jews helped to turn public opinion against the collaborationist policies of the Vichy regime. There were,

* For more on this point, see Jacob Katz, "Accounting for Anti-Semitism," COMMENTARY, June 1991.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in addition, Angelo Rotta, the indefatigable papal nuncio in Budapest, who ceaselessly prodded the Primate of Hungary to intervene on behalf of his country's Jewry, and Archbishop Sheptytskyi of Lviv in the Ukraine, who courageously denounced Germans and Ukrainians alike for massacring the city's Jews. Still another Catholic hero was Bernhard Lichtenberg, the provost of Berlin Cathedral, who died on his way to Dachau after having offered public prayers on behalf of the Jews.

Of these exemplars, however, only Lichtenberg is cited by name in *We Remember*, and he is mentioned in the company of two leaders of the German Catholic hierarchy whose actions during the Shoah were at once more problematic and more typical.

The first of these, Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich, is commended in the Vatican document for a series of sermons given during the winter of 1933 that "clearly expressed rejection of Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda." These speeches, delivered before overflow crowds in St. Michael's Church, did indeed defend the Hebrew Bible and the Jewish origins of Christianity against *völkisch* racists. Yet, for all the courage this must have taken just months after Hitler was named Reich Chancellor, Faulhaber also made it clear in his pronouncements that God's covenant with the Jews had been revoked after the appearance of Jesus. Furthermore, he insisted that the indispensability to Christianity of the Hebrew Bible had no bearing on "antagonism to the Jews of today," which he did not oppose. In 1934 he would indignantly deny suggestions made abroad that his sermons constituted a defense of German Jews or a criticism of Nazi policy.

The second churchman cited by *We Remember* was Cardinal Bertram of Breslau, the ranking prelate in German Catholicism throughout the period of the Third Reich. As the document states, he condemned National Socialism in print in 1931. But after Hitler rose to power, his objections became increasingly timid and inaudible. Never did Cardinal Bertram speak out from the pulpit against the anti-Jewish policies of the regime. To the contrary, in 1939 he sent a congratulatory telegram on the occasion of the Führer's 50th birthday, a greeting he repeated the following year. Even more astonishing, in May 1945 he celebrated a solemn requiem mass for Hitler shortly after the Nazi leader's suicide.

The elevation of these two men is accompanied in *We Remember* by utter silence about the German Church's acquiescence and, at times, complicity in the Shoah. As the examples of Cardinals Faulhaber and Bertram suggest, the hierarchy's warnings about Nazi ideology, such as they were, faded rapidly once the Nazis were in authority. Unlike their counterparts in France, Belgium, Italy, and Holland, leaders of the German Catholic Church, rather than attempting to guide their flock, tamely chose to follow it. They accepted the Nuremberg race laws, which—in defiance of Catholic doctrine—forbade intermarriage with baptized Jews, and they offered virtually no protest in the wake of the *Kristallnacht* pogrom of November 1938. Worse still, the Catholic Church in Germany collaborated with the Nazis by helping to establish who in the Third Reich was of Jewish descent—an act that had fatal consequences for many.

What explains this shameful record? Above all, no doubt, the belief among German Catholic churchmen that cooperation with Hitler would lead him to honor his Concordat with the Vatican, guaranteeing the Church's rights, and that the Nazis were committed ultimately to upholding Christian morality, especially against Bolshevik atheism. No less self-serving, if slightly more defensible, was the view within the German Church that the Nazis could be swayed more effectively through private appeals and protests than through public dissent.

In all of this, however, Catholic leaders in the Third Reich, like their Protestant counterparts, were at best disastrously naive. They were slow to grasp not only the basic totalitarian dynamic of National Socialism but also its more specific hostility to Christianity. They failed to see what became increasingly clear with each passing year of Nazi rule: that only determined public opposition and popular unrest stood a chance of diverting the regime from its monstrous aims. And at worst, as in the case of Cardinal Bertram, they lent their moral authority to the Nazi regime and thereby became complicit to a degree in its crimes.

And what of the Vatican itself? Did its actions during the Shoah redeem those of its German brethren? It is this question that has generated the most heated controversy over *We Remember*.

Pope Pius XI, whose death in 1939 preceded the implementation of the Final Solution, has largely been spared in the debate. While it is true that in 1933 he praised Hitler and spoke of their common struggle against Russian Communism, the Vatican document, not unreasonably, praises his 1937 encyclical, *Mit Brennender Sorge* ("With Deep Anxiety"), a sharp condemnation of Nazi racism and, as it would turn out, the only serious public criticism

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of National Socialism that the Vatican ever ventured. Noteworthy too—and cited in *We Remember*—was Pius XI's remark to Belgian pilgrims in 1938 that "anti-Semitism is unacceptable. Spiritually, we are all Semites."

But what is shocking is the document's presentation of Pius XI's successor, Pius XII, as an active opponent of Nazi anti-Semitism. In this, it seems to be self-consciously trying to refute a longstanding public impression that can be traced back to the early 1960's, when the wartime Pope appeared as the central character in a polemical, semi-documentary play by Rolf Hochhuth titled *The Deputy*; this stage work, a huge sensation at the time, depicted Pius XII as a man of almost criminal weakness and indifference in the face of Hitler's war against the Jews.

Subsequent historical works—by Guenther Lewy, Saul Friedländer, Friedrich Heer, Carlo Falcone, John Morley, and others—have elaborated on this profile, describing a Vicar of Christ who followed the dictates not of conscience but of *realpolitik*, who preferred Nazism to Bolshevism, who was ready to accommodate any regime so long as it respected Church property, who did not regard the war Hitler unleashed in Europe as unjust, and who did not think it advisable to declare the truth about the slaughter of European Jewry. From these books there has emerged a picture of the Vatican serenely going about its business while the moral and spiritual collapse of Europe proceeded apace.

That these criticisms rankle deeply was made abundantly clear in the aftermath of last year's release of *We Remember*, when they were again aired in rebuttal to the document's claims for Pius XII. In his syndicated column, Patrick J. Buchanan denounced all such critiques of the Pope as motivated by anti-Catholicism and moral blackmail; like the Vatican document itself, he cited grateful tributes paid by Jewish leaders themselves immediately after the war for the Pope's efforts to rescue their co-religionists. Writing in *Newsweek*, Kenneth Woodward branded as "monstrous calumnies" the charges that Pius XII had been pro-German, silent during the Shoah, or of little help to the Jews. Even the Vatican entered the fray. In a generally conciliatory appearance two months after the publication of *We Remember*, Edward Cassidy, the Cardinal responsible for the document, nevertheless protested that the memory of the wartime Pope had been "unjustly denigrated."

As it happens, some aspects of the more critical picture of Pius XII do need to be modified. It would certainly be wrong to present him as approving of Nazism or racist anti-Semitism. As secretary of state to Pius XI during the early years of the Third Reich, the future Pope was known to have contributed to formulating *Mit Brennender Sorge* and to share its anti-Nazi views. When Pius XII took office in 1939, moreover, the Germans assumed he was of one mind with his predecessor—a fact quickly confirmed by his first encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus*, which, as *We Remember* notes, warned against "the deification of the state" and theories denying "the unity of the human race."

During the Shoah itself, in those Catholic countries where Pius XII had some leverage, he tried to intervene at times to halt the deportation and mass killing of Jews by Nazi puppet governments. In Slovakia, he ordered bishops to intercede with President Jozef Tiso and other high officials. In fascist Croatia, the papal representative, along with the Croatian Archbishop Stepinac, worked behind the scenes to deter the savage Ustashe regime of Ante Pavelic from committing further murders. To Admiral Nicholas Horthy, the regent of Hungary, Pius XII sent an open letter asking that he do everything in his power to "save as many unfortunate people as possible from further pain and sorrow." In addition, when the Nazis occupied Rome in October 1943 and began deporting the city's Jews to Auschwitz, the Pope quietly opened buildings within Vatican City to offer refuge to those who managed to escape the manhunt.

What cannot be sustained, however, is the unconvincing and inflated claim in *We Remember* that Pius XII and his representatives saved *hundreds of thousands* of Jewish lives. In no instance did the Pope's intervention result in much more than a temporary respite in the killing. On even the most favorable reading of the historical record, his actions over the course of the Shoah were prudent to a fault. We may never know exactly how many Jewish lives he was responsible for saving, but the number is almost certainly far smaller than that implied by the Vatican.

AT ISSUE here is not some threshold figure by which to judge whether the papacy met its moral obligations. Rather, the question is whether Pius XII did in fact do everything he might have done to resist a genocidal campaign whose full dimensions, according to Vatican documents, were known to him no later than the middle of 1942. The answer, clearly, is that he did not.

The most obvious failing of Pius XII's policy was the extreme discretion with which it was communicated. Though dealing with brutal fascist regimes,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Holy See showed itself time and again to be more concerned with upholding the rules of diplomatic etiquette than with expressing its strong disapproval.

Perhaps the most revealing instance was Pius XII's one public reference to the Shoah, a statement that, although unmentioned in *We Remember*, has often been cited by the Pope's apologists to demonstrate that he was not "silent." Of what does it consist? A single sentence in his Christmas message of 1942 deploring the fact that "hundreds of thousands of people, through no fault of their own and solely because of their nation or race, have been condemned to death or progressive extinction." With all due allowance for the compressed, abstract style of papal pronouncements, this is a protest that lasted for the duration of a breath and that mentioned neither Jews, nor Nazis, nor any Nazi ally.

Still more disturbing are the various instances in which the Vatican undermined its own appeals on behalf of the Jews by showing deference to their persecutors. Though the Pope met on several occasions with the leaders of Croatia's Ustashe regime—a regime viewed by the Church as a defender of Catholicism and the West against both Communist and Orthodox Christian heresy—there is no evidence that he ever voiced disapproval of its atrocities against Croatian Jewry (or, for that matter, against hundreds of thousands of the country's Orthodox Christian Serbs). And in Rome, as the Nazis undertook their *Aktion* against the oldest Jewish community in Europe, not only were no words of anger heard from the Holy See, but Cardinal Maglione, Pius XII's secretary of state, assured the German ambassador that the Vatican did not want "to give to the German people the impression that it has done or wished to do the least thing against Germany during this terrible war."

There was a notable exception to this policy of quiescence and nonresistance. Unfortunately, it, too, suggests that, in confronting the Shoah, Pius XII's chief concern was less with the ongoing annihilation of the Jews than with the interests of the Church. The exception was this: the Pope demanded that the Nazis and their puppet regimes recognize baptized Jews as Catholics, and he instructed papal nuncios to intervene accordingly against discriminatory laws and orders of deportation. As it happens, these protests had a very limited effect; but it is no accident that of the born Jews whom Pius XII did manage to save, most had severed their ties to the very Jewish communities that were then in the process of being exterminated.

Defenders of Pius XII usually concede that his response to the Shoah was extremely restrained. But they insist there was good reason for this: public denunciations of atrocities against the Jews would have served no purpose, and may well have worsened their condition (difficult though it may be to imagine a worse plight). A case in point would be the public protest of Catholic bishops in Holland, who, following instructions from the Vatican, condemned the deportation of Dutch Jews to death camps in the East. In retaliation, the Nazis added the country's baptized Jews (including Edith Stein), a group they had previously left untouched, to the deportation lists. This experience is said to have dissuaded Pius XII from further confrontations.

Whether this was really so must remain an unresolved question, at least until the Vatican archives are opened to independent investigation. But less charitable motives cannot be ruled out. There seems little doubt that, as late as 1943, Pius XII hoped for a German victory against the Russians, his assumption being that Roman Catholicism would have a place in the "New Order" of the Nazis but stood no chance of one under Soviet Communism. When one adds to this the Pope's passionate love of German culture and Germany—he had been papal nuncio there during the Weimar era—his reluctance to speak out for the Jews becomes more comprehensible, though hardly more edifying.

Considering the obvious ambiguity of Pius XII's record during the Shoah, it is curious that the Vatican and a substantial part of Catholic opinion should feel the need to defend him at all costs. After all, no one is blaming the wartime Pope or the Catholic Church for the destruction of European Jewry, or even suggesting that Pius XII could have done much to stop the slaughter. Nor can one reasonably object to his quiet diplomacy where it did actually save the lives of Jews and other victims of the Nazis. But what is undeniable is the paucity of moral courage displayed by the Vatican when it came to the fate of the Jews.

Would it have made a difference if Pius XII *had* taken a firm stand? Any answer is necessarily speculative, and must be tempered by an awareness of the limits on the Vatican's influence. Yet Catholics constituted over 40 percent of the population of the Greater German Reich, and an overwhelming majority of citizens in France, Belgium, Italy, Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Croatia. What would have been the effect had Pius XII issued an unequivocal public denunciation of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nazi war against the Jews, or instructed Catholics not to carry out "criminal orders," or excommunicated the devoutly Catholic leaders of fascist Slovakia and Croatia or even Hitler himself? Perhaps very little. If nothing else, however, such actions would certainly have curbed some of the craven behavior of the German bishops. More, they would have encouraged, and endowed with the highest religious sanction, the efforts of those Catholics in occupied countries like France, Belgium, and Holland who did oppose or even resist the deportation of the Jews, or those in Poland and Italy who sought to hide Jews regardless of the danger of German reprisals.

Indeed, the inaction of the Church hierarchy highlights, by stark contrast, the physical and moral heroism of those ordinary Catholics (and Protestants) who hid, rescued, or saved Jews at great personal risk. The present Pope has paid tribute on a number of occasions to such people, who deserve to be remembered and honored for all time. It is therefore all the more bizarre that *We Remember*, a self-described declaration of repentance, should insist that the Church as an institution was blameless during the Shoah while ordinary Christians committed sins of omission or worse. Are rank-and-file Catholics to be held to a more stringent standard than those who set the policy of the Church? Do the "errors and failures" belong only to the flock and not to the shepherd? It is disheartening to think that so benighted a view should be the Church's final word on the subject.

AS MANY parts of *We Remember* amply demonstrate, Catholic-Jewish relations have changed dramatically for the better over the last several generations. The traditional anti-Judaism of the Catholic Church—one of the background factors that made the Shoah possible—has been greatly eroded. To put the matter positively, Jews are no longer regarded as enemies to be subjugated or denigrated but rather as respected representatives of an authentic, living religion with whom discussion and cooperation are a vital Catholic interest.

As for the views of the present Pope, it must remain a matter of conjecture how far they are fully and adequately reflected in the Vatican document, or to what extent they may have been diluted by the internal politics of the vast institution that he heads. Whatever the case, it is well worth registering at the end of this bloodstained century just how much John Paul II has already accomplished in the Church's relations with the Jewish people. One might even argue that in the last twenty years this son of Poland, a country with its own unmastered past with regard to the Jews, has done more to advance understanding between the two communities than did all his predecessors in the course of almost two millennia.

But that is precisely why the imperfections of *We Remember*—especially as compared with the more candid statements on the Shoah issued in recent years by the bishops of Germany and France—are a matter of great concern. After centuries of prejudice and hostility, culminating in the murder of European Jewry, the prospect has tantalizingly appeared of a day when anti-Semitism will no longer hold a place in Christian hearts. The arrival of that day depends not only on repentance and a generalized will to change but, ultimately, on an honest reckoning with the past.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How to Wreck NATO

Joshua Muravchik

THE HEADS of state of the NATO countries will convene in Washington in the last week of April to celebrate the 50th anniversary of what many have called history's most successful alliance. While past triumphs are toasted, the presence of three newly admitted members—Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic—will signify that, far from resting on its laurels, NATO is poised for an era of new accomplishments. But is it?

Washington had hoped the summit would adopt a blueprint for the future in the form of a "new strategic concept": expanding NATO's mission beyond territorial self-defense to peacekeeping in areas outside its borders. But as the *Economist* observed last December, in recent meetings "NATO diplomats found they could not agree on what the alliance was for, what weapons it would threaten to use, and in what circumstances." In all likelihood, the leaders gathered in Washington will produce some kind of document to paper over the fissures that have been revealed. But those fissures will not easily be healed, for they reflect underlying goals that are diverging and may be irreconcilable.

WHEN THE cold war expired nearly a decade ago, leaders on both sides of the Atlantic felt that the moment had arrived for Europe to take greater responsibility for its own security. For Europeans, the goal was independence and self-respect. For Americans, it was release from burdens.

By mutual agreement, a disintegrating Yugoslavia was chosen as the test case. It was an unfortunate choice at an unfortunate moment. As David Owen, special representative for Yugoslavia from the European Union (EU), would later put it: "This was going to be the time when Europe emerged with a single foreign policy and . . . it unwisely shut out an America only too happy to be shut out."

Owen spoke these words just as Bill Clinton began his presidency. Although the war in Bosnia had already touched the consciences of Western publics, for the next two years the American administration made only desultory efforts to stem the carnage. And those efforts, such as they were, met resistance from America's key allies. France in particular objected to proposals for NATO involvement, arguing that the crisis was more appropriately addressed by the Western European Union (WEU), an organization—not to be confused with the European Union—that was founded in 1947 and had long existed only on paper.

By 1995, both the Clinton administration and the Europeans recognized that, if this suppurating wound on the body of Europe were to be closed, more active American involvement was needed. This led to a brief NATO air campaign against the Serbs and then to the Dayton accords. France

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK *is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of* Exporting Democracy *and* The Imperative of American Leadership.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

abandoned, at least for the moment, its project of displacing NATO with the moribund WEU, and President Jacques Chirac even acknowledged, in a speech to the U.S. Congress, that "NATO simply doesn't work without American leadership." But this brief interlude of amity would not last.

In the crucible of Bosnia, Clinton, who had begun his presidency pledging to "focus like a laser" on the domestic economy, came belatedly to recognize the importance of foreign policy and took to referring to America grandiosely as "the indispensable nation." Once reluctant about the expansion of NATO eastward, he now made it a cornerstone of his second term. The Senate's 80-to-19 vote to ratify the admission of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic crystallized a post-cold-war American resolve to withstand the temptation of isolationism.

Europeans, however, were less celebratory about the discovery of America's "indispensability." Although few heeded the warning of Hubert Védrine, the French Foreign Minister, that NATO expansion was a "Trojan horse" by which Washington intended to keep Europe "under U.S. control," neither did they treat it with great enthusiasm. Rather, Europe's excitement was reserved for another project: the adoption of a single currency. Even if, as many European leaders acknowledged, the purely economic effects of the euro might be mixed, their hope was that it would lead to greater political cohesion. They especially hoped it would make Europe stronger in relation to America.

Nor was the euro the only measure being undertaken to strengthen Europe vis-à-vis the U.S. In 1996, the NATO foreign ministers endorsed the creation of something called a European Security and Defense Identity within NATO. In theory this meant that NATO's European members would be able to undertake missions in which United States forces would not participate. (It was stressed, though, that such missions would still rely on "NATO assets," which meant that Americans would supply most of the intelligence and logistics.) Another initiative went even farther, aiming to create, under the rubric of a Common Foreign and Security Policy, a European military capacity truly separate from NATO. At a summit this past December at St. Malo, Chirac and British Prime Minister Tony Blair declared formally that the EU "must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces . . . . so that Europe can make its voice heard in world affairs." To top it off, an effort has even begun to breathe life into the WEU.

The United States has officially welcomed each of these initiatives, just as it has the euro. It has also agreed to the appointment of a European as deputy commander of NATO with substantial authority at supreme headquarters. And Washington has paid conspicuous attention to the issues of pride and symbolism that seem especially important to the French: the Dayton accords were officially signed in Paris, the Kosovo negotiations were placed at Rambouillet, and a Frenchman was chosen to command the Kosovo "extraction force" in Macedonia.

But this has not sufficed. When the U.S. drew a line at the French demand that a "European" (read: Frenchman) be named chief of NATO's southern command, a move that would in effect have put a French admiral atop an American armada, France retaliated by postponing its own scheduled reintegration into the overall NATO military structure. And now much more serious divisions have emerged over what should be the next steps in the alliance's evolution.

AS THE Americans see it, the admission of new Central European democracies will pave the way toward, in the words of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, "a new and better NATO," one that will be "committed to meeting a wide range of threats to our shared interests and values" and that will work "to ensure stability, freedom, and peace in and for the entire transatlantic area." To the Europeans, however, adding to NATO's membership is one thing; adding to NATO's mission is another. As the Belgian newspaper, *Indépendant*, faithfully reported the mood on the continent, "Washington's proposals for a new global role for NATO have run into a wall of European opposition."

The issue has been joined over the question of NATO's relation to the United Nations, a dispute that may seem merely theoretical but is nevertheless symptomatic. Briefly: the French, German, Belgian, and Dutch governments, with the consent of other European leaders, have adopted the position that NATO should undertake no military action (other than defense of its own territory) without the prior authorization of the UN Security Council. Everyone understands that to turn decision-making over to a body in which Russia and China hold veto power is a formula for paralysis. Why then has it been proposed?

Some European spokesmen have said they are primarily concerned about obedience to international law, but this is hard to credit. For one thing, France has long pursued its own post-colonial policy in Africa, including intervening militarily on a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

couple of dozen occasions, almost never on the authority of the Security Council and sometimes without any legal justification whatsoever. Then, too, Security Council resolutions are not the only grounds in international law for the use of force; the North Atlantic Treaty rests upon the UN Charter's explicit designation of self-defense and "collective self-defense" as "inherent rights," a proviso that applies no less to NATO action in defense of Kuwait or Bosnia than to American action in defense of Germany. Finally, most scholars today agree that "humanitarian intervention" also constitutes a legally valid (if poorly delineated) category of military action; indeed, this was the only real legal justification for NATO's decision to authorize air strikes against Serbia over Kosovo.

If legal scruples are not the true reason behind the insistence on subordinating NATO's non-self-defense missions to the Security Council, the London *Daily Telegraph* was closer to the mark in noting "fears in European governments that NATO would become a global policeman, with Alliance members tagging along behind American-led foreign-policy initiatives." Paul Quilès, chairman of the defense committee of the French National Assembly, was blunter: "If we agree to this once, we run the danger of being at the mercy of all the international policy decisions made by the Americans."

In other words, the Europeans do not want to be drawn into joining the United States in a global policy. But they also do not want the United States to go it alone. Jacques Chirac has complained about America's "unilateral temptations," and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has likewise pointed to the "danger of unilateralism, not by just anybody but by the United States." The common denominator in this mishmash turns out to be precisely what it seems: an objection, *per se*, to any broad-gauge exercise of American power.

French leaders, including Chirac and Védrine, talk often of American "hegemony." This is a term given currency in international politics by the Chinese, who used it in the 1970's to justify their tacit alliance with the capitalist West against their fellow Communists in Russia. In other words, it is a term connoting menace. More recently, Védrine and others in France have coined an epithet for America: "hyperpower." In French as in English, the prefix means excessive, needing to be diminished. When Védrine says that "the entire foreign policy of France . . . is aimed at making the world of tomorrow composed of several poles, not just a single one," he clearly implies that what is required is not just strengthening the "several" but weakening the "one."

Although France is most outspoken, it is not alone in this attitude. In Germany, the magazine *Der Spiegel* has complained that "the Americans are acting, in the absence of limits put to them by anybody or anything, as if they own a blank check in their 'McWorld.'" For former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, the attraction of the euro is that it "will change the whole world situation so that the United States can no longer call all the shots." The difference is that for the French, unlike for the Germans, the task of weakening the hyperpower is no mere abstraction.

On a number of fronts, French policy has aimed explicitly at hamstringing the United States—or, as Védrine puts it, at applying a "principle of leverage." Thus, for more than a year, France has largely sided with Iraq in its confrontations with Washington; French oil firms have taken the lead in counteracting U.S. efforts to penalize the terrorist regime in Iran; Paris has made a heavy-handed effort to insert itself into Arab-Israel diplomacy; and in Bosnia, allied efforts to apprehend the Serbian leader Radovan Karadzic for war crimes were compromised when a French officer tipped him off. Perhaps the most dangerous ploy of all is France's attempt to forge a strategic alliance with Russia, encouraging that fragile country's reckless flirtation with pan-Slavism (as in its support for Serbia) and its ties with Arab tyrants like Saddam Hussein.

True, even during the cold war France was a difficult ally; but when push came to shove, it knew which side it was on, and which side threatened it more. Today, France seems to feel that American *hyperpuissance* is the principal obstacle to its own ambitions. As for the other Europeans, although most are not as rivalrous in their feelings toward America as Chirac and Védrine, many would probably agree with the view expressed in a Danish newspaper that America sees NATO solely as "a tool for [its own] global interests."

This is, to say the least, a curious way of putting the matter. In any immediate sense, the areas in which NATO action has been proposed or contemplated in recent years, including the Balkans and the Persian Gulf, are much more vital to Europe than they are to the United States. The Balkans, after all, are *in* Europe, and Europe is also more dependent on energy imports from the Gulf than is the United States. A similar point can be made about the whole problem of Islamic funda-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mentalism, which bears on policy toward Iran as well as the Balkans: tension with Muslim minorities is much more of an issue for Europe than it is for America.

Of course, to say that America's interest in those regions is not as immediate as Europe's is not to say that America has no interest. To the contrary, there is a good reason why so many Americans are concerned about events there and elsewhere. It has to do with the bitter lessons of World War II, which taught us to define American interests in a broader and more contingent sense. Ever since then, American policy has been guided by the idea that it is wiser to work for a more peaceful, freer, and more stable world than to wait until trouble comes knocking on our door. Which is to say that the new missions that NATO might undertake if Washington has its way would indeed serve American interests—in the same way NATO's old mission did.

In theory, the old NATO was a mutual defense pact. But in fact there was no mutuality in it: NATO was designed to defend Western Europe against a Soviet attack, which the United States was pledged to repulse. American policy was not altruistic, however. It was based on the sound calculation that if Western Europe fell under Soviet domination, America would be put at a severe disadvantage and would ultimately be endangered itself.

Similar reasoning now underlies the proposal that NATO prepare to confront new threats. Discouraging aggression, terrorism, weapons proliferation, ethnic conflict, mass murder—these are American interests and European interests at once. And just as the case for an enduring American interest in Europe entails contingencies more remote and speculative than those of the cold war, it also points to the European interest in issues and places beyond Europe's own borders and immediate self-defense.

THE PEEVISH resentment of American preeminence and the reluctance to connect one's own security to the general peace are two sides of the coin of selfish nationalism that Europeans like to believe they have transcended. That they (and others) should feel some envy of America is inevitable. As *Der Spiegel* put it: "Never before in modern history has a country dominated the earth so totally as the United States does today." But insofar as Europeans find intolerable the imbalance between America's power and their own, there is only one remedy consistent with the role of an ally. That is to build themselves up, not to pull America down.

Europe possesses wealth and population equal to America's, but it has not chosen to forge them into comparable sinews of geopolitics. It is, for example, well within Europe's means to strengthen its military forces. It currently spends about 2.2 percent of GDP on defense, one-third less than the share it allocated at the end of the cold war and one-third less than the United States allocates today.

What inhibits the Europeans? Those among them who think about the matter tend to believe the critical factor is lack of unity. This same belief, indeed, underlay the drive for a common currency and a common foreign and security policy. But it may be wide of the mark. In the Bosnian crisis, conflicts between Germany on the one hand and Britain and France on the other largely disappeared by the time the bloodshed began. For three years after that, Western Europe was on the whole united—united, that is, behind policies of weakness and cowardice. Nor has the EU evinced much disharmony over its utterly fruitless policy of trying to appease the Iranian regime in the name of "critical dialogue."

These two examples suggest that what Europe needs if it is to become more of a force in international politics is not so much unity as courage. Instead of dispatching to Bosnia impotent, blue-helmeted peacekeepers who in the end served only as Serbian hostages, the Europeans might have mustered the fortitude to defeat Serbian aggression, which surely they had the means to do. Had they so acted, they would be more powerful today—and the balance of strength within NATO would be different.

Védrine has summoned Europe to rally its "courage"—its "nerves of steel"—against the United States. But the courage to stand up to someone who wants to be your friend is like the courage of an adolescent taunting his parents. A truer demonstration of European courage would be tough action against sponsors of terrorism or enemies of Western interests and values like Iraq's Saddam Hussein or Serbia's Milosevic.

Ironically, the American proposal to redefine NATO's mission, received so coolly in Europe, might in fact contribute to European empowerment by establishing the principle of fighting for common ideals (just as, no less ironically, the rush to European integration may compound military weakness unless love of continent can truly replace love of country). Cooperating to address challenges in a wider geographic area would also put Europe on a more equal footing with America; it is when the two collaborate solely to defend Europe alone that Europe becomes a kind of protectorate.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To be sure, if the European response has been shortsighted, the United States can hardly claim that its leadership has brilliantly illuminated the path to a rejuvenated Western alliance. On those occasions when President Clinton has not ignored foreign policy altogether, he has approached it through the prism of domestic politics—including, as it seemed at the time, impeachment politics. This encourages Europeans to look cynically upon American pronouncements of high principle. No less harmful is the President's penchant for commercial diplomacy: by using his office to win contracts for U.S. firms at the expense of their European competitors in places like China, Clinton has undercut U.S. moral authority. Finally, the administration's long record of empty threats toward Iraq, Serbia, China, and others has hardly held up a model of courage.

But whatever the deficiencies of U.S. leadership, for Europeans it is playing with fire to expect that America will long endure peacetime "allies" whose tacit and sometimes explicit aim is to weaken us, to cut us down to size. For if NATO crumbles, they will suffer most. It was only the American presence in Europe in the decades after the close of World War II that put to rest the all-against-all insecurity that had such tragic consequences in the first half of this century. Even today, most Europeans still do not seem very confident they have surmounted the patterns of the past. As Margaret Thatcher revealed in her memoirs, both she and French President François Mitterrand sought to impede the reunification of Germany: four decades of the Bonn republic had not canceled the memory of other Germanies.

But we ourselves would hardly escape unscathed. The collapse of our foremost alliance might well propel the American people on a path of isolationism they would have cause to regret. If things went badly in Europe, our actions would surely come back to haunt us as they have done more than once before.

It would be pleasant to think that wiser heads among the European powers will prevail over sorer heads, just as it would be pleasant to think that, at the forthcoming summit, American and European leaders alike will face up to the risks and especially the sacrifices that will be required if NATO is to continue to be a bulwark of the peace. Pleasant, but—given the combination of European irresponsibility and the Clinton administration's live-for-the-moment approach to foreign policy—unlikely.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mythologizing King Hussein

David Wurmser

THE DEATH on February 7 of King Hussein of Jordan occasioned an almost unprecedented outpouring of tributes. His funeral was attended by every major international figure healthy enough to come, and he was universally hailed by his mourners as one of the greatest leaders of the 20th century—a man of courage, a visionary, and a force for moderation and peace.

Hussein certainly deserved admiration, not least for the manner of his death: he was the first Hashemite ruler since Feisal I of Iraq in the 1930's to die from natural causes. Hussein's grandfather had been gunned down before his eyes by a Palestinian nationalist, his father was forced to abdicate the throne, and his relative King Feisal II of Iraq was murdered in 1958 in one of the many regional revolutions inspired by Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Indeed, it was these personal experiences, plus the certain knowledge that many an Arab gunman relished the prospect of bringing him to a similar end, that shaped much of King Hussein's politics. Ruling a nation smaller and more barren of resources than any of its neighbors, he managed to keep it relatively insulated from the turbulent intrigues that have torn through Arab politics in this century. The very fact that Jordan never became another Lebanon redounds to the historical honor of its king. Still, whether he deserves the accolades heaped upon him in death is another question.

HUSSEIN ASSUMED the throne of Jordan on his eighteenth birthday in May 1953—a year after Nasser had seized power in Egypt as the self-proclaimed head of a radical pan-Arab nationalist revolution. The young king's first challenge came soon after coronation, when Nasser expelled the British from Egypt, encouraged a similar revolt in Algeria against the French, and pressed Hussein to follow suit. Since the stability of Jordan's regime then rested on armed forces commanded by senior British officers, Hussein's dilemma was clear. To oust them would leave him vulnerable, but to leave them in place would expose him to denunciation as an "imperialist tool" and worse.

Hussein buckled: in March 1956, he replaced the senior British officers under Sir John Bagot Glubb (known as Glubb Pasha). The vacuum thereby created was quickly filled by local operatives of Nasser, and an attempt at a coup promptly followed. Hussein was lucky enough to foil it, but the next year, his Iraqi relative King Feisal II was assassinated in a pro-Nasserite revolution that triggered a similar revolt in Jordan's army. Hussein was now forced to appeal to Britain and the United States for help. Though their armed intervention into Jordan and Lebanon broke the momentum of Egypt's pan-Arab schemes, there is no question that Hussein's timidity in the face of a

DAVID WURMSER, *a new contributor, is the author of* Tyranny's Ally: America's Failure to Defeat Saddam Hussein, *just published by the AEI Press.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

radical threat helped those schemes to progress as far as they did.

THIS SAME pattern would recur again and again over the ensuing decades as Hussein's efforts to coopt or appease implacable foes collapsed in fitful, ill-considered actions and/or last-minute appeals for external aid. Thus, after 1958, even as Jordan ceased to be a direct target of Nasser, Hussein tolerated the gradual build-up within his borders of one of Nasser's pet causes. This was the Palestine Liberation Organization, created by Egypt in 1964. The activities of the PLO, and especially of its pro-Syrian branch, slowly dragged Jordan into the crossfire of the Arab-Israel conflict. But a no less real threat from the PLO was the one it posed to Hussein's own monarchy.

In May 1967, Syria and Egypt moved toward war with Israel, and Nasser pressed Jordan to join in. By May 30, despite pleas from Israel to abstain from the clearly pending hostilities, Hussein turned over command of his armed forces to his radical nemesis in Egypt. War erupted on June 5, and, despite continued Israeli requests not to participate, Jordanian troops attacked the same day. In fierce fighting over the next days, Jordan lost East Jerusalem and the entire West Bank, areas it had conquered and annexed twenty years earlier in Israel's War of Independence. (In Jerusalem, Jordanian troops in 1948-49 had systematically desecrated Jewish graves and defiled houses of worship.)

If Hussein's effort to cooperate with the radicals in the Arab world led to calamity, it also failed to win him any respite from their pressure. By 1970, the PLO had built its forces in Jordan into a formidable conventional army that could credibly challenge the kingdom's independence. In September of that year—Black September, as it would come to be called—the PLO turned on its host. Fighting erupted on September 17, and by the next day Syria had joined the fray on the PLO's side, sending two divisions, including 300 tanks, across Jordan's northern border.

This time, it was not the United States and Britain—neither of which was close enough to help—but Israel that came to Hussein's rescue. With Israel's air force threatening Syria into retreat, and its army mobilized along the Jordan valley, Hussein's troops were free to crush the PLO. This they did, ruthlessly—thereby saving his kingdom from certain destruction.

The hard-won lesson of 1970 was the reverse of that of 1967. For Jordan, true safety inhered not in accommodating but rather in rebuffing the likes of Egypt, the PLO, and Syria; in cooperating (quietly) with Israel to maintain internal security; and in relying on both Israel and the United States for regional protection. It was a lesson Hussein seemed finally to have absorbed, and it paid off almost immediately: by keeping his border quiet during the Yom Kippur war of 1973 (even as he sent troops to the Syrian front), the king not only spared himself a further drubbing but procured a decade and a half of calm.

UNFORTUNATELY, AS Black September drifted into memory, so did its lessons. Slowly, subtly, but significantly, Hussein shifted gears. By the late 1980's he was once again trying to negotiate his place in the Arab world by means of his old tactics of appeasement and cooptation. And in short order, things again spun out of control.

The king's first mistake was his sudden announcement in July 1988 that he was henceforth relinquishing Jordan's claims to the West Bank, effectively handing over authority to the PLO. Until this point, Jordan had continued to administer most of the infrastructure in the territory—from schools and social services to mosques—just as it had done before Israel conquered it in 1967. Disbursing money and providing services had enabled Jordan to exercise significant influence over the West Bank, counterbalancing the PLO and forging pro-Jordanian alliances and coalitions among West Bank Palestinians. This in turn had created what became known as "the Jordan option"—the idea that any future arrangement with Israel over the West Bank and its Palestinian populace would be anchored to Amman.

It is unclear what motivated King Hussein to reverse course. Perhaps he wanted to put himself on the "right" side of the *intifada*, the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation that had erupted six months earlier. Or perhaps he felt that, by ceding legitimacy to the PLO, he could coopt Palestinian aspirations more effectively, especially if Israel were to succeed in crushing the *intifada*—a not unreasonable expectation at the time. Support of Palestinian statehood in the West Bank might buy him peace at home, neatly distinguishing Jordanian from Palestinian identity while formally championing both.

Whatever his motivation, his move canceled at one stroke everything he had won in 1970 by standing up to pan-Arab radicalism. Under any circumstances, his attempt to appease nationalist ambitions would have stood a limited chance of success, since, for the radical Palestinians, those ambitions rested at least as much on antipathy to him and his regime

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as they did on hatred for Israel. As it was, the king's legitimation of the PLO also undermined the framework of Israel-Jordan cooperation upon which the stability of both countries depended.

These fateful acts set Jordan up for its next blunder: the king's 1991 decision to remain "neutral" on the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq's Saddam Hussein.

The Gulf war was one of the most important events in the Middle East in the latter half of this century—perhaps even more important than the Six-Day war of 1967. If Israel's smashing victory in the earlier conflict dealt a grievous blow to pan-Arab radicalism, Desert Storm might have buried it. At the very moment when the Soviet Union, the main support of anti-Western regimes everywhere, was crumbling, Saddam Hussein had dragged his country, his cause, and his friends—including the PLO—into a murderous, deluded frenzy. For Jordan, in particular, this was a decisive opportunity. The tide in Arab politics had turned: Arab radicalism was dying, Arabs knew it, and, by siding with the anti-Saddam coalition, Jordan might have emerged as the shining exemplar of a better mode of statecraft.

King Hussein missed his moment. Instead of turning his 35-year defensive maneuvers against radicalism into a truly offensive campaign—under the aegis of superpower support and with the blessing of other regional powers—he bowed to Saddam and the PLO, seeking yet again to coopt the forces that meant to consume him.

After the Gulf war, Hussein watched helplessly as Syria and others scrambled to assert their interests in a limping Iraq. Israel, consumed by the *intifada*, was sunk in its own morass. Jordan was alone, tied to Iraq's sinking ship and watching the inexorable rise of anti-Amman feeling among the Palestinians who still formed a large majority in the country. By the time Hussein tried to retrieve the situation in 1995 by siding with the United States in its declared wish to see Saddam removed from power, it was too late. Not only did this earn him the ire of the Iraqi dictator, but he signed on with Washington in the absence of any real indication that Washington meant what it said.

As we approach the present, the cumulative consequences of these various decisions can be seen inexorably working themselves out. The disastrous choices of 1988 and 1991, echoing those of 1967, left King Hussein in a highly weakened position. By the mid-90's, Israel, in part impelled by the king's abdication from the West Bank, had entered into its own negotiations with the PLO. These negotiations—the Oslo process—presented Hussein with yet another tremendous dilemma, for the more ensconced the PLO became among *West* Bank Palestinians, the more influence Arafat exerted among *East* Bank Palestinians (i.e., those living in Jordan proper), thus raising the specter of precisely the sort of internal unrest that had been suppressed at such cost in Black September 1970.

In this light, the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty of October 1994 may be seen as an attempt by the king to repair the damage his previous actions had wrought. By Israel, certainly, the peace treaty was welcomed with heartfelt jubilation. But at home it did little or nothing to mitigate the king's problems, being met instead with stony silence or active resistance by Jordanian elites, and setting off a round of bitter exchanges with the PLO.

Here one needs to bear in mind that, by shifting gears in 1988, Hussein had set adrift all those Palestinians in the West Bank, from journalists and intellectuals to political figures to businessmen and financiers, who for the preceding twenty years had sided with him against Arafat. Indeed, one of Arafat's first acts upon entering the West Bank territories in the 1990's was to shut down two Palestinian newspapers that had been set up in the 80's to help bring a pro-Jordanian perspective to the news. Hussein failed to oppose this move, just as he failed to respond to Arafat's restrictions on the free movement of pro-Jordanian Palestinians in the West Bank, or to the wave of "collaborator killings" by PLO gangs ostensibly bent on hunting down agents of Israel's intelligence services but in reality focused more on purging the Palestinian community of its pro-Jordanian elites. Of no less significance, Hussein summarily abandoned a number of individuals he had brought to Amman in order to break the monopolistic control over Jordan's finances exercised by banks in the hands of pro-PLO interests.

So it is no surprise that, in the wake of Jordan's 1994 treaty with Israel, Arafat should have become alarmed, for the treaty suggested the possibility of a revived Israel-Jordan consortium, one that might challenge the PLO and seek to reestablish Amman's dominance in the territories. In the event, Arafat need not have worried.

The crunch came over the question of who had the authority to appoint the mufti, the supreme religious leader, of Jerusalem. Israel's treaty with Jordan affirmed the king's traditional prerogatives as the guardian of Muslim holy shrines in Jerusalem. But to Arafat, this concession, involving control over one of the most important institutions on the West Bank, threatened the PLO's claim to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state. He lashed out, swearing that the king could "drink sea water" if he thought the PLO would stand still for this. The PLO called for a national strike and a day of mourning to protest the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, and PLO leaflets were distributed in the West Bank warning the king to stay away from Jerusalem. True to form, Hussein gave in, ceding to the PLO what may have been his last remaining asset in the West Bank.

THIS, THEN, is the situation inherited by Abdullah, Hussein's son and successor: a kingdom that despite everything remains an outpost of political sanity and continuity in a region torn by violence, but rocked on the one side by the specter of a radical PLO state and on the other side by the looming threat of Iraq. That Abdullah's throne still exists in Hashemite hands at all is a tribute to his father's acumen. That it is so sorely beleaguered is a product of his father's missteps.

Already the new king has been thrown a series of tests with profound implications. Five days after Hussein's death, Yasir Arafat announced in Hebron that he favored a "union of Palestine and Jordan," thereby putting paid to Hussein's 1988 dream of purchasing peace by distinguishing the two entities. A few days later, the PLO's mufti challenged what remained of Jordanian religious authority in Jerusalem by expanding the size and scope of his own institutions at the al-Aqsa Mosque, the affairs of which were to have remained under Jordanian auspices. So far, Abdullah has followed in his father's footsteps, meeting provocation with accommodation; he has even allowed the PLO to publish and sell its newspapers in Jordan for the first time since 1967, and to broadcast a show once a month on Jordanian TV channels.

Perhaps most ominous of all for the new king's future is the formation in recent years of a new regional grouping—a broad, quadrilateral rapprochement of Syria, Iran, Iraq, and the PLO, all encouraged by Russia. In 1997, the PLO called upon the four to form an "eastern front" to confront not only Israel but Turkey; in response, Jordan, Turkey, and Israel formed a kind of counterbloc. Hussein's brother, Crown Prince Hassan, who for 35 years had served as the king's fiercely loyal adviser, led the effort to forge these strong trilateral ties. But in his last act Hussein deposed Hassan as crown prince, and his removal brings the continued viability of the arrangement—upon which Jordan's security critically depends—into question.

Few can deny King Hussein's skill at tactical maneuver, which enabled him simply to survive—perhaps his greatest achievement and one of no small benefit to his country. But his was basically a reactive approach to political affairs, lacking a firm foundation in principle and dangerously passive in the face of threats. Once or twice, as in Black September 1970, Hussein mustered the fortitude to respond impressively; more often, he fell prey to short-sightedness and miscalculation.

Lauded at his death as a man of courage, Hussein in fact showed himself cautious to the point of timidity. Praised as a visionary, he was too frequently a man of narrow views, with little or no gift for strategic thinking. As for moderation, although he may in himself have been a model of that virtue, by failing repeatedly to fight for it he embroiled himself and his country in a doomed, decades-long effort to placate and beguile the forces of immoderation. In the end, instead of subduing them, he abetted their unappeasable and so far unquenched fury.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OBSERVATIONS

Of Professors and Pedophiles

Barbara Lerner

AMONG THE subjects thrust to the forefront of consciousness in our sex-drenched age is child molestation. As recently as twenty years ago, Americans were far less concerned about this vile phenomenon, or at any rate were not exposed to it so relentlessly. But then came a string of sensational and highly publicized cases, some of which turned out to be other than what they at first seemed.

During the 80's, the most notorious such cases involved accusations of mass abuse at several nursery schools across the country. The proprietors of the McMartin Preschool in suburban Los Angeles were said to have raped their young wards and terrorized them with satanic rituals. The Amirault family of Malden, Massachusetts, was charged with sexually torturing dozens of children between the ages of three and six at their Fells Acres Day School. And a twenty-three-year-old teacher, Margaret Kelly Michaels, was accused of sodomizing the tots in her care at a New Jersey nursery school.

It gradually emerged that, as Dorothy Rabinowitz of the *Wall Street Journal* was the first to show in a series of trailblazing articles, most if not all of these nursery-school cases had less to do with child molestation than with prosecutorial excesses and parental hysteria. Exposure of the deeply manipulative way in which testimony was elicited from the young "victims" eventually led judges and juries to acquit almost every one of the defendants or to overturn their convictions. But that hardly meant that real molestation was not taking place elsewhere. Indeed, as the 80's merged into the 1990's, a spate of sex-related murders of young girls soon seized the place in public attention formerly held by the nursery-school scandals.

There was, for instance, twelve-year-old Polly Klaas, abducted from her Petaluma, California, home in October 1993. A year later came Megan Kanka, a seven-year-old New Jersey girl whose death at the hands of a released sex offender prompted the passage of various "Megan's Laws" requiring the registration of such predators. In 1996, the body of JonBenet Ramsey of Boulder, Colorado, a six-year-old "beauty queen," was discovered in the basement of her own home. And in May 1997, seven-year-old Sherrice Iverson was molested and strangled by a California teenager who had lured her into a toilet stall at a Nevada casino.

Is child molestation really on the rise, or are we overreacting to a small number of sensational episodes? And if the latter, why have parents and others been so easily led to conclude the worst? As it happens, sorting through these troubling issues has already become something of an academic subspecialty, and a fashionable one at that. Two recent entries in the field are *Moral Panic: Changing Concepts of the Child Molester in Modern America** by Philip Jenkins, a professor of history and religious studies at Pennsylvania State University, and *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting*† by James R. Kincaid, a professor of English

BARBARA LERNER, *a psychologist and attorney, runs a consulting firm in Chicago. She has written for* COMMENTARY, National Review, *and other periodicals.*

* Yale University Press, 320 pp., $30.00.

† Duke University Press, 368 pp., $24.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at the University of Southern California. Though the books differ in approach—Jenkins favors the postmodern historical mode, Kincaid prefers old-fashioned mass psychoanalysis—both authors agree on one fundamental matter: the recent burst of concern about child molestation has nothing to do with any actual danger posed to our children.

ACCORDING TO Philip Jenkins, the true incidence of child molestation in America has changed very little over the course of the 20th century. What has changed—radically and often—is our *perception*, the way we "construct the phenomenon." In some periods we are willing to see child molesters as immature individuals unlikely to cause serious harm. At other times—during our periodic "moral panics"—we exaggerate both the prevalence of the crime and its destructive effects, "demonizing" molesters as violent serial predators.

The source of these moral panics, Jenkins maintains, is anxiety about sexual experimentation, especially among juveniles. Thus, the "great panic of 1935-57"—what Jenkins calls the "Age of the Sex Psychopath"—was sparked in his view by the permissive legacy of the freewheeling 1920's and, later, by the weakening of parental supervision caused by the disruptions of World War II.

Wartime America in particular was marked, Jenkins writes, by "a greater occurrence of extramarital and premarital sexual contacts as well as new opportunities for both genders to discover or express homosexual impulses." Young people—most scandalously, young women—took advantage of the new dispensation. In the words of a contemporary observer quoted by Jenkins, "The great ports of embarkation crawled with giggling semi-pros in bobby sox; Manhattan's Central Park, San Francisco's notorious Turk Street, Chicago's Michigan Avenue, all reeked of precocious sex."

It was inevitable that this increasingly open sexuality would be met by what Jenkins calls "prurient horror" and a repressive backlash, which partly took the form of a sudden "discovery" that American society was being overrun by sex killers and pedophiles. So, too, with today's obsession with child molestation—just one more turn, Jenkins asserts, in the cycle of moral panic. Having suffered the liberating gales of the sexual revolution of the 1960's, the forces of reaction have again set out on a witch-hunt in an effort to tame unruly eros.

JAMES KINCAID, for his part, sees something rather different at work. The current "popularity" of the child-molestation issue, he suggests, has nothing to do with the unspoken fears that Philip Jenkins discerns. To the contrary, tales of child sex abuse are so ubiquitous today because they give us *pleasure*, erotic satisfaction. At heart, we are all pedophiles.

Nor, according to Kincaid, is this a new development. Adults in the modern West, at least since the Victorian era, have enjoyed lustful feelings and fantasies about children, a proposition Kincaid supports with scores of examples from literature and popular culture. Though the Victorians were not the first to eroticize children—he instances the (to him) highly suggestive Christian iconography of the infant Jesus—he locates the root of our own problem in the Victorians' inability to acknowledge their passion. Even Freud, he writes, the most liberated of late Victorians and a thinker of "ironic sophistication," failed to come to terms with the fact that we are sexually attracted to prepubescent children and they are sexually attracted to us.

As a result of this unhealthy repression and denial, Kincaid argues, we are forced to express our sexual feelings toward children in hostile and devious ways. Above all, we project those feelings onto pedophiles, hiding behind a cloak of self-righteous condemnation in order to dwell in loving, lingering detail on tiny bodies and the terrible things that perverts do to them.

What then to do? Needless to say, Kincaid does not recommend that we simply allow adults to rape and sodomize small children. But he urges us to settle upon some happy middle ground between muzzling our pedophilic lusts and letting them run wild. We must "find it in our hearts," he writes, "to be easier on ourselves and, consequently, easier on our children"—a prescription whose details he leaves to the reader's imagination.

PERHAPS THE first thing to say about all this is that, whatever the changing fads of academic discourse, shocking the bourgeoisie never goes out of style. Indeed, so commonplace has the urge to scandalize become that it is difficult to greet even two such egregiously amoral books as these with much more than a resigned shrug. Still, despite (or because of) their overweening obtuseness, Jenkins and Kincaid do in fact help us to see how we have reached our present sexual pass.

To Philip Jenkins, the idea of moral panic supplies the key to understanding the wild swings in our attitudes toward child molestation. What we are now experiencing, he avers, is just a replay of the fearmongering that served to repress the fast and loose sexuality of American youth at mid-century, and is as little based in fact.

It is but a moment's work to point up the ludicrousness of this contention. Comparing the 1940's or 1950's with the 1990's, we see a steep rise in every measure of sexual danger and dysfunction: more unwed mothers, more broken families, more unwanted and aborted children, and a plague of sexually-transmitted diseases from AIDS to new drug-resistant forms of syphilis and gonorrhea. As for the incidence of child molestation itself, the statis-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tics are famously slippery, as they are for every kind of sexual crime—a fact that both Jenkins and Kincaid gladly exploit in their attempt to discredit the idea that abuse is now more common. But it is highly unlikely that while every other measure of social and sexual pathology shot dramatically upward over the decades since the 1950's, the rate of child molestation alone should have remained unchanged.

Nor is it true, as I can attest from personal experience, that the postwar years were suffused with sexual fear. For young people like myself and my friends, who came of age in a Chicago where the notorious Leopold and Loeb child-murder case of 1924 was still talked about, such phenomena were freakish occurrences, hardly seen as a constant background danger. Though we were occasionally warned to steer clear of strangers, the thought never entered our heads that we need be wary of our neighbors, teachers, or preachers, much less our fathers, for fear they might have impure intentions toward us.

Jenkins is no less ignorant, or gullible, when he comes to the mating games of girls in those days. Though there may well have been "giggling semi-pros" among us, just as there have always been, the way my friends and I got our thrills with the sailors we picked up on Michigan Avenue and took into Grant Park with us hardly "reeked" of "precocious sex." We strolled and ran and laughed with them, but our intimacies consisted of wearing their hats, holding their hands, and occasionally kissing them good-bye before running off to catch our buses and get home in time for supper. They were, after all, boys from small towns in the West and Midwest—shy, lonely, eager teenagers just like us, and as excited by the little we did as we were.

People born decades later find it almost impossible to grasp how safe American young people felt in those days, and how assured our parents were of our safety. And the reason they find it hard to grasp is simple: the moral panic of recent years—the one that is unreal no less than the one that is real—has no precedent in our history.

If Jenkins is useless in understanding the transformation of childhood from a time of relative innocence to one of sexual menace, James Kincaid is of greater service—or at least his errors are. Like many self-proclaimed Freudians, Kincaid misunderstands the master's ideas. On his reading, Freud was a prophet of the sexual revolution of the 1960's, the first thinker to recognize that, if only we lived as our natural instincts dictated, we could occupy a worldly paradise, free of the limits and constraints imposed by repressive society. As Kincaid himself summarizes this view, all our sexual problems ultimately derive from "the main bullies of our culture: faith, law, and submission to them."

Whatever else Freud was, however, he was no advocate of free love and no enemy of law. In fact, in the Freudian scheme, civilization itself—that which makes us human—depends crucially on our ability to repress our sexual impulses. And as necessary as such limits are in relations among adults, they are doubly so in the rearing of children. For Kincaid, Freud's resistance to sexualizing children is the one hypocritical flaw in an otherwise liberationist creed. But Freud entertained no illusions about sexuality: it was indeed a basic life force, one whose vast destructive potential needed to be properly tamed.

ONE HARDLY has to be an advocate of Freud or of Freudianism to understand that Kincaid-like illusions about sex are the stuff of which both behavior and attitudes have been fashioned since the 1960's. It was under the banner of the sanctity of their erotic instincts that countless members of the baby-boom generation kicked aside the sexual limits that, exceptions duly noted, had been respected by their parents. In doing so, they ended by making the world a more perilous place both for themselves and for the children that would be born to them.

Surely one of the most extraordinary things about the nursery-school cases of the 1980's was the readiness of parents to believe that their children had been forced to participate in bizarre public orgies conducted by brazen pedophiles—pedophiles who resembled the *parents themselves* in being white, middle-class, mainstream Americans. Something in the common experience of the baby-boom generation rendered it unusually credulous when confronted by charges of child molestation, and unusually susceptible to moral panic. What these parents knew, even if they did not acknowledge it, was that the dream of sexual liberation had a nightmarish underside, and pedophilia, fantasized or acted upon, was its manifest content. They had met the enemy, and, just as Pogo warned, it was themselves.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Being Matisse

Steven C. Munson

FOR SOMEONE who wishes to understand the work of Henri Matisse (1869-1954), a good picture to begin with is *The Snail* (1953). One of the painter's last works, created a year before his death, it is made of pieces of painted paper that have been cut and pasted onto white paper. There is nothing in this picture that looks like a snail, or like anything other than the brightly colored irregular rectangles and other forms of which it is composed. And yet there is no question that in looking at it, even in reproduction, what one sees and feels is the unmistakable movement of a snail.

What creates this sensation of movement, and the involuntary feeling of amused pleasure that recognition of it induces? It is the way in which those colorful pieces of paper are arranged. That arrangement represents a unity of form, color, and line (the line, in this case, having been executed with scissors and paste rather than with pen or brush) that seems simplicity itself—almost child's play. It is not. Matisse's ability to evoke the essence of an experience so fully and so directly was the product of a certain kind of artistic sensibility and a certain kind of mastery, gained after a difficult struggle with academic institutions, artistic tradition, poverty, and, above all, himself.

THAT MATISSE would become one of the two towering figures of 20th-century modernism in painting—the other, of course, being Pablo Picasso—was certainly not something he or anyone who knew him could have imagined early on. Like Vincent van Gogh, Matisse discovered his passion for art relatively late and seemingly without intending to. The story of that discovery has been told most recently by Hilary Spurling, an English theater and book critic and the author of two previous biographies. Her superb study, *The Unknown Matisse*,* carries the painter's life through the Fauvist period to 1908, when he was achieving, for the first time, a measure of financial security as well as recognition as the leader of the avant-garde in painting.

As Spurling reminds us, Matisse was not slated to be a painter. His father was a successful seed merchant in Bohain-en-Vermandois, a provincial town in northern France not far from the place where Henri was born. The region was famed for its weavers, whose beautifully patterned textiles were, in the industrializing second half of the 19th century, in increasing demand among the fashionable bourgeoisie in Paris. As a boy, Matisse fell in love with such fabrics, which he would later put to brilliantly decorative use as both subjects and inspirations for such paintings as *Harmony in Red* (1908). Still, although he took drawing classes in school and was recognized for his ability, the thought of an artistic career had not yet occurred to him. He wanted to be a circus performer or an actor; his father felt that he should begin preparing himself to take over the family business.

As it happened, his dreamy nature, and stomach problems brought on by nervous tension, ultimately rendered this option impractical, so a position was found for him as a

STEVEN C. MUNSON, *whose article, "Why We Love Van Gogh," appeared in our December 1998 issue, is a painter living in Washington, D.C.*

* Knopf, 480 pp., $40.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

clerk in a law office. In 1889, Matisse was rejected for military service on account of his health, and that same year, suffering from a hernia and exhausted from constant battling with his father over his future, he ended up in the hospital. During a listless recuperation, he was advised by the patient next to him—who was copying a picture of a landscape—to try oil painting as a distraction. His mother brought him a paint box with two pictures, one of a water mill, the other of an entrance to a hamlet. Henri painted the water mill first. It was a revelation:

> Before, I had no interest in anything. I felt a great indifference to everything they tried to make me do. From the moment I held the box of colors in my hand, I knew this was my life. Like an animal that plunges headlong toward what it loves, I dived in. . . . It was a tremendous attraction, a sort of Paradise Found, in which I was completely free, alone, at peace.

The idea of finding personal freedom in the activity of painting recurs throughout the story told by Spurling, often in the context of Matisse's experiences of grave self-doubt. During his time at the Académie Julian in Paris—which he entered with two career-related failures already behind him and no real prospects, hoping he might be able to qualify as an art teacher in a state school—Matisse felt a terrible sense of inadequacy and frustration. His teacher was William Bouguereau, the "pope of the French art world," who told him he could not draw and would never learn. "The problem," writes Spurling, was that he "was unable or unwilling to follow Bouguereau's attempt to explain the academic principle of enhancement, which involved smoothing out any defects in the model, endowing the human figure with a classical authority or presence."

Reflecting later on his response to this encounter with academic tradition—a tradition untouched even by the Impressionist revolution that had taken place in French painting—Matisse said:

> What has been taken for boldness [in my work] was no more than the fact that anything else proved too difficult. Freedom is really the impossibility of following the same road as everybody else: freedom means taking the path your talents make you take.

At the time, however, he still had to try to work his way through the system. Having failed the entry exam for the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1892, Matisse managed to enter the school anyway, under the sponsorship of Gustave Moreau, who took on students regardless of their examination results. He spent the next six years working under Moreau—an artist who, though also rooted in tradition, encouraged his students to develop their own aesthetic imagination.

DEEPLY IMPRESSED by Goya and Chardin, Matisse spent a great deal of time copying old masters in the Louvre; in 1895-96, painting at Belle-Île on the Atlantic coast, he discovered van Gogh and Impressionism at the hands of an Australian expatriate painter, John Peter Russell. Matisse showed one of the products of this labor, *The Dinner Table* (1896-97), at the Salon de la Nationale in 1897. An Impressionist-influenced interior, it exudes a delicate luminosity and quiet compositional strength. But the public—still expecting to see the kind of idealized pictures Matisse felt he could not paint—recoiled in horror; from his father, who had come to Paris for the exhibition and who stood under his son's painting listening to the comments of the viewers, Matisse heard reports that "people saw germs at the bottom of my decanters."

This was not the last time that Matisse would be accused of painting "diseased" pictures. (According to Spurling, the charge was not uncommon; critics had nicknamed the new Pointillist painters "the Bubonics.") What kept him going in the face of criticism—even of apparent disaster—was the support of those who knew, or believed, that he was destined for greatness. Around the time of the showing of *The Dinner Table*, he met the great Impressionist Camille Pissaro, whose encouragement—"Very good, my friend, you are gifted. Work, and do not listen to anything anyone tells you"—brought the young painter to the verge of tears.

Matisse also found solace among his many friends. Spurling paints a vivid picture of the life these men led, first as young single bohemians, then as young husbands and fathers, as they struggled to achieve some degree of professional success. Not all of them were poor or without resources; but some, including Matisse—especially after his father cut off his meager allowance and his wife Amélie's parents were ruined in the fallout from one of the greatest swindles in modern French history—often had trouble obtaining the barest necessities. At times like this, Matisse depended, for both financial and moral support, on cherished colleagues like Simon Bussy, who renewed, after six years, a friendship that had been broken by artistic differences; and Albert Marquet, whose apparent imperturbability was such that when Matisse told him of the sudden death from typhoid of a mutual friend, Marquet replied, "Oh well, if people didn't die, they'd have to be killed."

Matisse himself was far from being cool, calm, or collected. Among other things, he suffered terribly from insomnia; his wife would often read to him, sometimes until dawn, until he fell asleep. And during the early 1900's, when he was grappling with the example of Cézanne, with Neo-Impressionism, and with his own radical pictorial innovations, he worried that he might go mad.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THOSE INNOVATIONS erupted in 1905 at the Mediterranean port of Collioure, where Matisse and André Derain created the pictures for which they would soon be dubbed *les fauves*, or wild beasts. These paintings employed what were then shocking combinations of seemingly arbitrary colors to depict natural forms in the intense southern light. But the goal was not to represent a scene or subject naturalistically; rather, it was to capture certain emotions or sensations connected both to the experience of it and to the uninhibited use of pure color. In describing how it felt to be making such pictures, Matisse said, "We were at that point like children before nature, and we let our temperaments speak. . . . I spoiled everything on principle, and worked as I felt, only by color."

As Spurling points out, it is difficult to understand today just how revolutionary this approach was:

> Matisse was not simply discarding perspective, abolishing shadows, repudiating the academic distinction between line and color. He was attempting to overturn a way of seeing evolved and accepted by the Western world for centuries. . . . He was substituting for [an] illusion of objectivity a conscious subjectivity, a 20th-century art that would draw its validity essentially from the painter's own visual and emotional responses.

Matisse's son-in-law, Georges Duthuit, later recalled what it was like to be around Matisse at this time:

> The obvious forebodings experienced by the painter—who is at the same time so prudent and so orderly that people call him "the Doctor"—made him tremble. During the few years when he was able to endure this vision, Matisse spent whole nights without sleep, nights of desperation and panic.

The conflicts and anguish that his struggle gave rise to made it all the more imperative for Matisse to pursue the goal he had set for himself: to find a mode of pictorial expression that would enable him to impose some kind of order on the chaos in his own psyche. He once stunned a visitor by remarking that what drove him to take up his brush was the impulse to strangle someone. Yet the absence of violent or ugly feeling in the works themselves shows just how far he was from being the kind of painter—all too familiar in the history of 20th-century art—who gives his brush free rein to declare his state of mind, whatever it may be.

In this regard, it is hard to resist comparing Matisse with the German expressionist Egon Schiele (1890-1918). Like Matisse, Schiele drew women with extraordinary sensitivity and intense erotic feeling; unlike Matisse, he frequently did so at the behest of a lascivious fascination that was not only insurmountable but was in fact essential to his near-pornographic art. What Matisse sought was not merely an expression of his personality—though he would have been the first to say his art was that—but an aesthetic ideal: the harmony of a "restful surface." (Restful for the spirit, that is, not for the eye, which can almost never rest when looking at a Matisse.)

In short, his aim was not to display his psychic condition but rather to heal it. And in seeking to heal himself, he produced pictures that had, and continue to have, the same restorative effect on others.

LITTLE OF this was clear, however, at the time; and in any event the public was not yet ready to take seriously a new kind of painting that violated accepted notions not only about how pictures should be made but about the very purposes of art. At the Salon d'Automne of 1905, Matisse showed *Woman in a Hat*. "I'm in my element when the house burns down," said Amélie Matisse of this picture, in which her face is composed of various greens, blues, yellows, oranges, and reds, with lilac and black and probably a few other colors was well. According to Spurling,

> It looked to contemporaries like a crude piece of graffiti brutally slashed or smeared across the canvas. . . . The public doubled up with laughter in front of it. The critics used the same insults in public . . . that the people of Bohain uttered behind Matisse's back.

At the Salon des Indépendants in 1906, Matisse fared no better with either the art public or the intelligentsia. He submitted only one painting, *Le Bonheur de vivre*.

Spurling quotes the art dealer Berthe Weill:

> Parisians who can still remember the event say that from the doorway, as they arrived at the salon, they heard shouts and were guided by them to an uproar of jeers, angry babble, and screaming laughter, rising from the crowd that was milling in derision around the painter's passionate view of joy.

After seeing this picture, Paul Signac, then the leading Neo-Impressionist and a man who had only recently prodded Matisse to dash the constraints that had been holding him back, wrote that

> Matisse . . . seems to have gone to the dogs. Upon a canvas of two-and-a-half meters he has surrounded some strange characters with a line as thick as your thumb. Then he has covered the whole thing with flat, well-defined tints which—pure though they may be—strike me as disgusting.

But such views, although prevalent, were not the only response to Matisse's radically new pictures. The art dealers Eugène Druet and Ambroise Vollard, after observing the public reaction to Matisse's Fauve exhibits, began to buy and stockpile

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his canvases. Discerning collectors, like the American Leo Stein and the Russian Sergei Shchukin, were moved and impressed; Stein bought both *Woman in a Hat* and *Le Bonheur de vivre* shortly after they were exhibited.

But it would be with Leo Stein's even more discerning sister-in-law Sarah that Matisse would form a profound bond. What she wrote about one painting in 1911—"It penetrated my spirit and my heart at a single glance. . . . In looking at it, I felt that emotional completeness which convinces me of the reality of a work of art without the need to analyze it"—could be said to describe the very experience of looking at a Matisse. In a different way, so could what Pablo Picasso said when he saw *Blue Nude: Memory of Biskra* (1907) and expressed his puzzled annoyance: "If he wants to make a woman, let him make a woman. If he wants to make a design, let him make a design. This is between the two."

In truth, what bothered Picasso about such pictures bothered their creator as well. Matisse was sometimes so disturbed by the unexpected aesthetic results of his efforts that he vainly sought to disown them. Referring to *Pink Onions* and the two versions of *The Young Sailor*, three of the many key works done between 1905 and 1907 at Collioure, Spurling writes:

> The drastic simplification of these canvases made him so uneasy that he passed them off to friends in Paris as the work of the local postman. ("You're lying, Matisse," said [his good friend and fellow painter] Jean Puy as soon as he saw *Pink Onions*, "you painted it yourself.")

The simplifications to which Spurling refers—another critical element in creating pictures that tapped into the emotional life of the viewer—sprang in part from Matisse's observations of his own children making art. And this touches on another of the main themes of Spurling's book—namely, the extent to which the success of Matisse's aesthetic cause was intertwined with his family life. As she writes:

> His children prided themselves on being Fauve children. . . . All the young Matisses responded to the paintings in the studio frankly and directly. They were taught from their earliest years to look closely and to describe their responses clearly to their father, who learned from what they saw in his paintings as much as from what he found in theirs.

If Matisse's sincere efforts to explain how he had suddenly realized what drawing was by watching his son Pierre were utterly characteristic of him, they also made him an object of ridicule to the Picasso clique, whose three main members, the poet Guillaume Apolinaire and the writers Max Jacob and André Salmon, evinced what Spurling describes as "an element of schoolboy thuggery" toward him. Spurling tells the story of an exchange of pictures between Matisse and Picasso in 1907. Picasso chose a portrait of Matisse's daughter Marguérite, done—as if by a child—in large areas of color and bold outlines. Although this painting radiates intelligence and vulnerability—it was in such pictures that Matisse found the tranquility he seemed always to be searching for—Picasso's hangers-on thought it had been accepted by their master as a joke and they used it as a target in games of suction-cup darts in his studio. There can be little doubt, however, that Picasso himself, with what Spurling describes as his "famously rapacious gaze," recognized the significance of this painting.

WHICH BRINGS us to a question that Spurling deals with only tangentially: the nature of the relationship between the two greatest artists of the 20th century. A show focusing on the influence they exerted on each other—"Matisse and Picasso: A Gentle Rivalry"—is now running at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. But, influence aside, there is also the question of each man's character and its relevance to his art.

For example, Picasso is often given credit for boldness, but he was also careful about testing the waters. In the second volume of his projected four-volume biography,* John Richardson describes Picasso's use of Georges Braque, his partner in Cubism:

> He needed him as a decoy. . . . By holding back and allowing the stalwart young Braque the honor of exhibiting the first Cubist painting, Picasso hoped to put himself out of range of attack.

By contrast, one of the points Spurling stresses is that Matisse repeatedly displayed the courage to act on the implications of his own responses to life and art regardless of what others thought.

In this connection, Spurling's account also makes it clear that Matisse had the same integrity as a man that he did as an artist. He was loyal to and supportive of his friends, and generous toward younger artists. And in times of family crisis, he made sure to take care of those around him. When his mistress left him because she did not think he would ever amount to much, he took the responsibility for raising their daughter Marguérite. This was not only the best thing for the child; it also spared his former lover the then-disastrous consequences of unwed motherhood. Later, when he married—and he chose a woman who in heart, mind, and soul could not have been a better partner—Amélie Matisse treated Marguérite as very much her own daughter and the two became exceptionally close.

Again by contrast, around the time Marguérite Matisse was thirteen, Picasso decided to adopt a thirteen-year-old girl of his own. As

**A Life of Picasso: 1907-1917*. Random House, 500 pp., $55.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Spurling puts it, "this was the orphan called Raymonde who had to be sent back to her orphanage four months later, when Picasso showed signs of the wrong sort of interest as a foster parent."

IN HIS book, Richardson assumes a defensive tone in discussing Picasso's personal shortcomings and on occasion comes close to suggesting that artistic genius entitles one to do as one pleases. (He evidently fears that fully acknowledging Picasso's character flaws would somehow detract from his artistic achievements, but those seem secure enough.) The great value of Spurling's biography is that she approaches her subject in an altogether different spirit, which is really that of George Orwell. Like Orwell, she is delightfully dispassionate and crystal-clear in her prose, and does not waste words. But she also seems instinctively to understand the importance of a point Orwell made in reviewing a novel by Cyril Connolly that celebrated the debauched way of life of an artists' colony on the Mediterranean:

> Obviously, modern mechanized life becomes dreary if you let it. The awful thralldom of money is upon everyone and there are only three immediately obvious escapes. One is religion, another is unending work, the third is the kind of sluttish antinomianism . . . that Mr. Connolly seems to admire. The third is certainly the worst, but in any case the essential evil is to think in terms of *escape*.

Nearly a half-century before Orwell wrote those words, unending work was the choice made by Henri Matisse once he realized his true vocation. That effort was critical to Matisse's self-liberation as a painter—to his embracing a reliance on intuition in the search for tonal relations that could express, as completely as possible, feelings based in experience. This approach would remain a central part of Matisse's art, even as it would undergo several major transformations in the decades after 1908.

What it has meant for the rest of us is suggested by a story Spurling tells about Greta Moll, another serious collector of Matisse's work who accepted his offer to paint her portrait. After ten sittings, "Both artist and model agreed that at this stage the portrait was strikingly like, and very beautiful." But Matisse was dissatisfied, feeling that (in his own words) "I had got no further than the charming features" and "had not managed to catch her statuesque aspect." That night, the painter would later recall, "Abandoning all caution, I worked on it for an hour, perhaps two, ending up with the feeling that I had been most satisfactorily delivered." But the next day, when he showed the Molls the canvas, they were "completely devastated by the results of my work, which struck them as disastrous." Spurling tells us why:

> His procedure was remorseless. In the finished portrait, color has been simplified, detail suppressed and design flattened so that the coarse features and massive forearms of the model rhyme with the blown-up arabesques of the toile de Jouy in the background.

After two days, the Molls, "with heavy hearts," agreed to take the picture. A half-century later, however, Greta wrote as follows: "The painting became ours, and we loved it more and more. . . . It is one of Matisse's most beautiful and powerful works." And she reported with satisfaction André Salmon's reaction to the portrait: "I could kill the man who owns it in order to call it mine." In such responses as these, one glimpses the essence of Matisse's art.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MUSIC

Masterpieces of the Century: A Critical Guide

Terry Teachout

A QUARTER-CENTURY ago, the history of 20th-century music looked quite different from the way it looks today. Many critics and scholars believed then that the universal acceptance of serialism—the nontonal method of harmonic organization invented by Arnold Schoenberg and disseminated throughout the Western world by his students and disciples—was inevitable. Others, like the composer-historian Eric Salzman, thought the future of classical music lay with even more "advanced" developments than serialism:

> The old categories—serial, aleatory, closed form, open form, chance, and ultra-rationality—are no longer really relevant. For the younger composers, and many of the older ones, the barriers are down, the categories destroyed, the old battles over and done with. Any kind of statement is possible. All possible materials and all possible relationships between creator, creation, performer, and perceiver are possible (including none).

Both camps agreed, however, that whatever else was to come, the old tonal traditions had definitely run their course. Even though nearly all the major composers of the first half of the century had continued to believe that tonality was as crucial to musical meaning as grammar is crucial to the intelligibility of language, the living line of classical music was understood by critics to run instead from Wagner through Schoenberg to the nontonal modernists of the postwar era. All other stylistic tendencies—the neoclassicism of Igor Stravinsky, the folk-flavored nationalism of Béla Bartók, the neoromanticism of Sergei Prokofiev—were dismissed as historical dead ends. With the deaths of Dmitri Shostakovich (in 1975) and Benjamin Britten (in 1976), supposedly the last giants of the breed, it was taken for granted that the long reign of tonality had come to a close.

By the 1980's, however, it was becoming clear that the critics and scholars were wrong. For one thing, the listening public had remained all but unanimous in its rejection of nontonal music. For another, the success of new "minimalist" composers like Philip Glass, John Adams, and Steve Reich, whose harmonic language was triad-based and quasi-tonal, was having a galvanizing effect on their younger peers, impelling them to turn their backs on nontonal music and instead begin to adopt tonal techniques. While the tradition-based music of today's new tonalists has yet to be generally accepted by the American musical establishment, it, too, has already begun to find favor with audiences and performers.*

If serialism and the avant-garde are now dead (as is apparent) and tonality is in the process of being revived (as seems likely), then it follows that the history of classical music in the 20th century must be rewritten accordingly. Nontonal composers long thought to have been indisputably major—Schoenberg, in particular—are now ripe for thoroughgoing revaluation, while less fashionable tonalists like Paul Hindemith and Francis Poulenc are

TERRY TEACHOUT, COMMENTARY's *music critic, is a contributor to* Time *magazine.*

* For a discussion of these composers, see my article, "The New Tonalists," in the December 1997 COMMENTARY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

looking more important today than at any time since their deaths. Also up for reassessment is the ultimate historical significance of once-influential composers who must now be judged in light of the continuing failure of their work to find a place in the standard repertoire. For in the long run the question of influence is of purely academic interest; what matters is whether a composer's music strikes us as boring or interesting, forgettable or memorable, good or great.

THE FIRST step in rewriting the history of 20th-century music, then, is to ask: what were the works that will be listened to and loved so long as music itself continues to be made? In recent years there have been surprisingly few serious attempts to address this question. In part, no doubt, that is because the very act of canon-making is now regarded with derision by left-wing scholars. Yet the idea of a canon retains its firm grasp on the imagination; even in this egalitarian age of diversity-by-mandate, we still seem to believe in masterpieces. And so what follows is my own list of 50 classical masterpieces composed since 1900, together in each case with my recommendation of a recording or, occasionally, recordings.

In compiling this list, which I shall present in three installments over the next months, I applied the following criteria:

• The works were not chosen because they are "representative" or "influential," or in order to produce a "balance," but solely for what I consider their intrinsic quality.

• Each has received at least one first-class recording that is currently in print.

• Each has had an ongoing performance life outside the country of its origin. (Masterpieces are by definition universal, not provincial.)

• Although some of the works are popular, some less so, each has been heard more or less regularly since the date of its original premiere (or successful revival).

• Despite the foregoing two rules, a few works have been included that I expect will be more widely played in the next century than they were in this.

• Finally, there are no works by living composers. This is not because no major composers are active today, but simply in order to give posterity at least a preliminary chance to speak its piece.

I should stress that I have made no attempt to rank these 50 pieces in the order of their quality. Even though I believe some are better than others, at the very highest levels of excellence the concept of quality necessarily becomes slippery. There is no meaningful sense, for example, in which Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto can truly be said to be "better" than his Seventh Piano Sonata, any more than Mozart's Clarinet Quintet is "better" than the G-Minor Symphony.

I do believe, however, that some of the composers I have chosen are better than others, and that is why, although there are 50 works, there are only 29 composers. Specifically, the list features one composer with four pieces, four composers with three pieces, and ten composers with two pieces. This four-tier hierarchy strikes me as a more meaningful way of coming to grips with the problem of relative merit than by making a futile attempt to compare, say, Bartók's Fifth String Quartet and Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony.*

Every list is arbitrary. But while compiling this one, I did invite several similarly inclined composers and performers to submit their own preferences. As I compared our several efforts, it became clear that we shared a broad-based consensus of taste—often extending all the way down to the level of individual pieces. In a few cases, my own thinking was swayed by the unanimous views of colleagues; but the last word was mine.

In short, the following list contains a representative cross-section of what I believe to be the best classical music of the 20th century, and every work on it seems to me to be of permanent interest. This month's installment, in chronological order, consists of the first 15 compositions, which take us from 1900 to roughly the end of World War I, a convenient resting point.

1902

1. Claude Debussy
Pelléas et Mélisande

Though it has never been popular outside France, *Pelléas* is the first great modern opera, and still casts its fragile yet mysteriously potent spell on connoisseurs of French music. Furthermore, no single work defines more clearly the divergence between Austro-German and Franco-Russian musical tradition—the fork in the road of 20th-century music. At first glance, *Pelléas* may appear to be an impeccably Wagnerian symbolist music drama (right down to the use of leitmotifs as "calling cards" for the characters), yet its atmosphere is wholly French, and Debussy's use of harmonies derived from the whole-tone scale points directly to the freer, more flexible tonal language of the Franco-Russian composers.

Herbert von Karajan's exquisitely refined 1978 recording with the Berlin Philharmonic, featuring the much-loved American mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade as Mélisande, combines Wagnerian sensuality with French finesse to uncanny effect (EMI CDCC 49350, three CD's).

1903

2. Maurice Ravel
String Quartet in F

Debussy and Ravel are invariably discussed in tandem as the twin avatars of musical impressionism, but they were in fact as dissimilar in

* In trimming the list to a manageable size, I applied some weighting to the hierarchy, thereby reflecting my opinion of the relative importance of the 29 composers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

temperament as Anton Bruckner and Gustav Mahler. Where Debussy is vaporously elusive, Ravel is direct and elegant, nowhere more so than in his only string quartet, a model of Apollonian balance (though the slashing finale gives the lie to the absurd notion that his music lacks inner fire). "In the name of the gods of music—and in my name, too—do not touch a note of your quartet," Debussy is supposed to have said upon hearing that his colleague had doubts about the work. The anecdote may not be true, but it ought to be: Ravel never composed a more perfect piece.

The Quartetto Italiano's stereo remake of the F-Major Quartet, as perfectly poised as the piece itself, is now available on a budget CD that also contains fine performances by the Beaux Arts Trio and the violinist Arthur Grumiaux of Ravel's two other great pieces of chamber music, the A-Minor Piano Trio and the G-Major Violin Sonata (Philips 454 134-2).

1904
3. Giacomo Puccini
Madama Butterfly

Puccini is one of the half-dozen major composers whose careers pivoted on the fulcrum of the new century. Though his sensibility was unambiguously romantic, he was fully aware of the harmonic innovations of Debussy and Ravel (as well as of the potent theatrical impact of naturalism). The finest of his operas to have been completed after 1900 was *Madama Butterfly*, a work whose well-deserved mass popularity should not be allowed to obscure its exceptional musical quality and dramatic effectiveness.

Many recordings of *Madama Butterfly* are first-rate, but the best—albeit by a narrow margin—is the one by Victoria de los Angeles, Giuseppe di Stefano, Tito Gobbi, Gianandrea Gavazzeni, and the orchestra and chorus of the Rome Opera House (Testament SBT 2168, two CD's).

1909
4, 5. Gustav Mahler
Das Lied von der Erde
Symphony No. 9

Unlike Puccini, Mahler had a genuinely modern sensibility (he even contrived to be psychoanalyzed by Freud himself). If his harmonic language rarely extended beyond the perimeter of Wagnerian precedent, his structural innovations and chamber-style orchestral palette foreshadowed much that would come after World War I. Yet Mahler's music, at once obsessively introspective and grandiose in scale, is fully as romantic as that of Berlioz or Tchaikovsky, and his two final masterpieces, the symphonic song cycle *Das Lied von der Erde* and the Ninth Symphony, are the swan songs of 19th-century romanticism, intensely nostalgic and deeply affecting.

The Vienna Philharmonic has always had an equivocal relationship with the music of the Jewish-born Mahler—hardly a surprise, given the orchestra's long history of anti-Semitism—yet its performances of his symphonies have an idiomatic quality unrivaled by any other orchestra. Leonard Bernstein's highly strung 1962 recording with the Philharmonic of *Das Lied von der Erde*, featuring James King and the great German baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (singing the alto songs, an alternative sanctioned by the composer), is unforgettably passionate (London 452 301-2). Bruno Walter's 1938 recording of the Ninth Symphony, made at a live performance just prior to Hitler's *Anschluss* of Austria, is less emotionally extreme but still compelling (Dutton Laboratories DUT 5005).

1910
6. Richard Strauss
Der Rosenkavalier, Op. 59

For die-hard reactionaries who still contend that traditional tonality has run its course, Strauss's preeminent contribution to musical modernism is to be found in his opera *Elektra* (1908), in which he peered anxiously into the abyss of atonality. But audiences the world over continue to prefer *Der Rosenkavalier*, a warmly humane comedy of manners whose libretto, by the playwright Hugo von Hofmannsthal, is a model of wit and intelligence. Strauss' bittersweet, waltz-colored score may not exactly be Mozartean (though he thought it was), but it is irresistible all the same.

Der Rosenkavalier, like *Madama Butterfly*, is eminently "phonogenic," and few recordings of the complete score are without their memorable moments. Still, most collectors prefer von Karajan's 1956 version with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Christa Ludwig, and the Philharmonia Orchestra (EMI CDCC 56242, three CD's).

1910-1913
7. Claude Debussy
Preludes for Piano

The most successful of Debussy's various attempts to create a sonic equivalent of Impressionist art are his preludes for piano, each of which bears an evocative title (though the titles, significantly, appear not at the beginning but at the end of each piece). Virtually every aspect of his contribution to 20th-century music can be heard in miniature in these pieces, and though their extreme originality has been obscured by decades of imitation, Debussy's once-startling innovations remain central to the lexicon of modern piano technique.

The preludes—especially the lyrical ones—have never been played with more tonal refinement and technical control than by the Italian pianist Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli (DGG 413 450-2 and 427 391-2).

1911
8. Jean Sibelius
Symphony No. 4 in A Minor, Op. 63

In 1934, the English composer-critic Constant Lambert called Sibelius

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"the most important symphonic writer since Beethoven"; though few were prepared to go quite that far, he was then widely regarded as a great composer. But he fell from critical grace (though not public favor) after World War II, and only since the break-up of the serialist monopoly has he begun once again to be treated with appropriate respect. His despondent Fourth Symphony did remain in fashion during the long years of disrepute, mainly because of its bleakly polytonal harmonies, and it is certainly a modern masterpiece.

The best modern version of the Fourth Symphony is by von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic (DGG 439 527-2).

9. Igor Stravinsky
Petrushka

Serge Diaghilev's legendary Ballets Russes put the foremost composer of the 20th century on the map, first with *The Firebird* (1910) and then with *Petrushka*, the choreographer Michel Fokine's fantastic tale of a melancholy, mischievous puppet who comes to life. The languorously romantic *Firebird* was recognizably the work of one who had been Rimsky-Korsakov's star pupil, but the folksong-derived tunes, crackling bitonal harmonies, and brightly glittering orchestration of *Petrushka* were all Stravinsky's own. They alerted European audiences to a cool, crisp wind that was blowing out of Russia, one that would sweep away the long-unquestioned dominance of German romanticism.

Not all of Stravinsky's own recordings are worth hearing—he was a reasonably competent but unevenly inspired conductor—but his 1960 performance of *Petrushka*, made with an ensemble of Los Angeles studio players billed as the Columbia Symphony Orchestra, is one of the most effective of his later recordings, and leaves no doubt as to how he wanted the piece to sound (Sony MK 42433).

1912

10. Arnold Schoenberg
Pierrot lunaire, Op. 21

Atonality makes sense only when intended to serve as a musical representation of nonsense—that is, psychosis or some other dire mental disturbance. In that case the ear registers it not as a separate musical language but as a deliberate distortion of the normal vocabulary of tonality. ("Like blasphemy," Constant Lambert quipped, "it requires a background of belief for its full effect.") That is why *Pierrot lunaire*, a cycle of 21 settings of poems by Albert Giraud, "works" in spite of the illogic of its harmonic syntax: Schoenberg's splintered harmonies, weirdly delicate instrumental sonorities, and keening vocal line, half-spoken and half-sung, are the exact musical equivalent of Giraud's surrealist texts.

Jan DeGaetani's coolly committed version of *Pierrot lunaire*, accompanied by Arthur Weisberg and the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, is a superlatively musical rendering of a fiendishly difficult work (Elektra/Nonesuch 79237-2-ZK). Schoenberg's own 1940 performance—his only commercial recording as a conductor—is a flawed but fascinating companion piece (Sony MPK 45695).

1913

11. Igor Stravinsky
The Rite of Spring

Twentieth-century music may not start with *The Rite of Spring*, but no piece is more universally identified with musical modernism. Today's ultra-virtuosic performances have made Stravinsky's most famous ballet score more familiar (and less shocking), but they have done nothing to diminish the monolithic impact of its granite-hard harmonies and precisely calculated orchestration. Eighty-six years after its riotous Paris premiere, *The Rite of Spring* remains the colossus of modern music: you may not like it, but there is no getting around it, and no forgetting it.

The most effective of Stravinsky's three commercial recordings is his 1940 performance with the New York Philharmonic, a no-nonsense interpretation in which the notoriously unruly orchestra was on its very best behavior—the proof being that seven of the eight original 78-rpm sides were first takes (Pearl GEMM CDS 9292, two CD's). The best stereo recording is von Karajan's ferocious 1977 remake with the Berlin Philharmonic (not its overrefined predecessor, which Stravinsky hated), coupled with a seraphically beautiful *Apollo* (DGG 415 979-2).

1915

12. Claude Debussy
Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp

As Debussy grew older, his music became more spare and enigmatic, though he never lost his sensuous delight in the blending of instrumental timbres. The Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp, one of a group of three related instrumental works completed shortly before his death, is perhaps the finest example of his subtle late style, transparently scored for a chamber ensemble of unorthodox makeup and breathtaking in its harmonic clarity and quiet lyricism.

All three of the late sonatas are included on an indispensable Philips CD, the Flute-Viola-Harp Sonata in a handsomely played performance by Roger Bourdin, Colette Lequien, and Annie Challan, the sonatas for violin and cello in equally accomplished versions by Arthur Grumiaux and Maurice Gendron (Philips 422 839-2).

13. Jean Sibelius
Symphony No. 5 in E Flat, Op. 82

If Sibelius's Fourth Symphony (see under 1911) is a masterpiece, so is the unambiguously tonal Fifth. "God opens His door for an instant and *His* orchestra plays the Fifth

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Symphony," the composer wrote to a friend shortly after he began sketching it out, and for all the seeming megalomania of these words, it is easy to see what he meant: the Fifth Symphony is one of the most unequivocally affirmative works to be written in this century by a major composer.

As with the Fourth, the best modern version of the Fifth is by von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic (DGG 439 982-2). Perhaps even more eloquent is Serge Koussevitzky's 1936 recording with the Boston Symphony, available on CD in adequate sound (Pearl GEMM CDS 9408, two CD's).

14. Manuel de Falla
Nights in the Gardens of Spain

Comparatively little classical music of the first rank has come out of the Spanish-speaking world, but Manuel de Falla's fastidiously worked compositions, though few in number, are nonetheless of the highest quality. In this piquant three-movement suite for piano and orchestra, unmistakably Spanish melodies and rhythms float gracefully atop impressionist harmonies and French-style instrumental textures.

Arthur Rubinstein, who did more to popularize this marvelous piece than any other pianist, recorded it three times, always with the utmost panache. The second of these performances, with Enrique Jorda and the San Francisco Symphony, has been digitally refurbished as part of RCA's "Living Stereo" series (RCA 09026-68886-2).

1917

15. Serge Prokofiev
Violin Concerto No. 1 in D, Op. 19

Contrary to the opinion of innovation-obsessed critics, the classicizing Prokofiev was one of the century's four or five major composers. His youthful style can be heard at its most vivid in his First Violin Concerto, a work in which soaring lyricism and sardonic wit are juxtaposed to hugely stimulating effect. Completed just as Prokofiev was preparing to leave Russia for what would become an eighteen-year-long exile, this delectable showpiece contains no hint of the agony and disillusion that would follow in the wake of the twin horrors of World War I and the Russian Revolution, leaving an indelible mark on classical music between the wars.

The best modern recording of the First Violin Concerto is by Gil Shaham with André Previn and the London Symphony, coupled with an equally impressive performance of the Second Concerto in G Minor, Op. 63 (DGG 447 758-2). In addition, no Prokofiev lover should be without Joseph Szigeti's astonishingly bold 1935 recording, fancifully accompanied by Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic (Pearl GEMM CD 9377).

To be continued

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

Hard Times

Freedom from Fear:
The American People
in Depression and War,
1929-1945
by David M. Kennedy
Oxford. 1,176 pp. $45.00

Reviewed by
Algis Valiunas

MOST KINDS of trouble are easier to fall into than to climb out of, and America has never fallen into deeper trouble than during the Great Depression and World War II. The United States did arise from its ordeal, but for a time the fear was very real that it would not. Disaster succeeded disaster in a terrifying rush, and the bottom appeared to be still a long way down, if it was there at all.

How the United States escaped the plunge toward doom and emerged as the most prosperous and powerful of nations is a defining episode of 20th-century history. The story is often told as a pleasing morality tale: a peaceable giant with an inclination to sleep late is moved to righteous anger, and disposes of miscreant evildoers with help from his friends. There is something to this version, but it leaves out a great deal. Now, in the latest volume of the Oxford history of the United States, David M. Kennedy, a professor of history at Stanford, has written an account of those times that is seemingly determined to leave out nothing at all.

CALVIN COOLIDGE remarked during his presidency that, if the federal government were to close down, it would be quite a while before most people noticed. When the Depression hit in 1929, the United States was almost unique among industrial nations in having no federal unemployment insurance or old-age pensions. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's declaration that he wanted the government to look after everyone's welfare "from the cradle to the grave" transformed the American conception of what the federal government could and should do.

During FDR's first term in office (1933-37), federal agencies sprang up to tend to almost every imaginable misfortune, providing aid to countless people in grievous need. Kennedy understands this change in government's scope to be mostly a good thing, although he does note dissenting opinions. He also points out, in contrast to the received wisdom, that the New Deal failed to restore economic health. Unemployment averaged 17 percent throughout the 1930's and never fell below 14 percent.

Still, whether it accelerated or retarded recovery, in hindsight FDR's program looks demure beside others that were then being offered to the American people, whether by dreamy types with incendiary urges or by predatory hucksters. Kennedy's rogues' gallery of populist charlatans makes up one of the most sobering chapters in this history; one is made to see the peril to which America was exposed, and to consider what might have happened had there been no New Deal.

Tens of millions of Americans, for example, fell into step behind assorted visionary zanies. Francis

ALGIS VALIUNAS *writes on history and culture for* COMMENTARY *and other periodicals.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Townsend, a doctor from Long Beach, California, proposed in 1933 that the government grant every American over the age of sixty the sum of $200 a month—twice the prevailing median family income. Father Charles Coughlin, the radio priest from Royal Oak, Michigan, who went from being a Roosevelt enthusiast to damning the "Jew Deal," promoted the nationalization of banks and leading industries. Senator Huey Long of Louisiana promised to make "every man a king" by means of radical economic redistribution and confiscatory income taxes on the wealthy.

Roosevelt, the great hero of the liberal historians who have dominated the writing on this period, is also the hero of Kennedy's account. But Kennedy shows him capable of being distinctly unheroic—a temporizer, a coward, a demagogue, a second-rate intellect out of his depth. FDR is known for appealing to the best in his countrymen, but, when it suited him, he was not above appealing to the worst, exploiting and exacerbating class resentments.

"We have earned the hatred of entrenched greed," Roosevelt proclaimed in his 1936 State of the Union address. He plainly loved being hated—knowing that his own followers loved him all the more for the hatred he inspired—and he gave as good as he got. When the "Roosevelt Recession" of 1937 shook his support, he muttered darkly about a vast right-wing conspiracy to wreck the New Deal and to bring him down. His flunky Harold Ickes, the Secretary of the Interior, was sent out into the streets to fulminate against the danger of "big-business fascist America—an enslaved America."

THERE WERE of course real fascists in the world at that time, and they posed a real danger. With troubles enough of its own, however, the United States preferred to avert its eyes. In 1931, Japan seized Manchuria. When America sat on its hands, the Japanese, writes Kennedy, "drew the appropriate conclusions"; Pearl Harbor was already a gleam in their eye. By 1935, when Italy invaded Ethiopia, FDR had repented somewhat of his isolationism. Feeling obliged to do something but afraid of a popular backlash, he reacted with a "moral embargo" on the shipment of oil and other important raw materials to Italy. But the measure was utterly toothless, and in subsequent months American oil exports to Italy almost tripled. It was Mussolini and Hitler's turn to draw conclusions.

Meanwhile, U.S. immigration laws barred the door to European Jews increasingly desperate for a safe haven. Fewer than 5 percent of Americans responding to a 1938 *Fortune* poll favored permitting more refugees to enter. "The Depression," observes Kennedy, "had helped to reinforce an isolationism of the spirit, a kind of moral numbness, that checked American humanitarianism as tightly as political isolationism straitjacketed diplomacy."

The withdrawal and self-absorption with which America responded to the Depression emboldened the dictators, and speeded the onset of war. Before Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt had vowed to make America the "great arsenal of democracy." After it, he called on the nation to provide "a crushing superiority of equipment in [every] theater of the world war." The initial American strategy, Kennedy observes, was "to fight a war of machines rather than men." Others would do most of the dying (some 400,000 Americans fell in the war, while 46 million people died altogether, over 20 million of them Soviets), but the U.S. would see to it that they went into battle well-equipped.

Indeed, America was to perform prodigious industrial and technological feats without which the Allies could not have won, and America was to make itself fabulously prosperous in the bargain; but this is not the stuff of which cherished memories of wartime glory are made. Kennedy does not take a heroic view of the American part in the war. Instead, he dwells with deliberate emphasis on such matters as the racist "bestiality" into which our war with the Japanese sometimes descended; Jim Crow in the armed forces; the internment in concentration camps of Japanese Americans; the "terror bombing" of civilian targets as the war neared its end; FDR's fatuous reliance "on good will and personal charm to compose the conflicting interests of nations," and his failure to apprise his countrymen of the postwar Soviet threat; and the eagerness with which Americans at home, charmed by wartime prosperity, pursued "the sirens of consumerism."

KENNEDY'S HISTORY is impressively cogent, but despite his effort at comprehensiveness, there remain critical questions he really does not consider. What were the causes of the Depression in America, and were Roosevelt's Brain Trust economists right to treat it as a peculiarly American problem with an American solution rather than as a global disorder? Was there a compellingly sensible alternative to the New Deal—in particular, a conservative alternative—that was not merely the self-interested outcry of the rich? And if an alternative existed, what would have been its prospects at a time when people were desperate for government to do something about their trouble, even if what government did proved incapable of bringing that trouble to an end? Perhaps it is too much to expect such questions to be answered, but one wishes they were raised.

As for World War II, Kennedy performs a necessary service in telling that portion of the truth that Americans are least inclined to hear. Yet in his eagerness to revise the American myth of the "good war," fought for the best of reasons by a people of unfailing decency, Ken-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nedy obscures a larger truth: as wars go, this one really was about as good as it gets. Even the best of wars brings out the worst in men, and if it is important for Americans not to imagine themselves wiser, braver, stronger, or more humane than they are, it is just as important that they not magnify their imperfections—standard issue, after all, for human beings.

For the most part, though, David Kennedy adheres to his course of intelligent disenchantment. And even when he goes off course, it is not without a bracing and manly earnestness that all but atones for the lapse. In sum, *Freedom from Fear* admirably records the most severe trials of American mind and mettle in this century

Bardolatry

Shakespeare:
The Invention of the Human
by Harold Bloom
Riverhead Books. 745 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
Donald Lyons

Harold Bloom is one of the characters of modern literary criticism. Now full of titles—he is, among other things, Sterling professor of humanities at Yale and Berg professor of English at New York University—he has written more than twenty books and has superintended and introduced anthologies of criticism about hundreds of world authors. His amazing productivity has behind it a frenzied ambition to have his say, to insist on the correct apprehension of every known scrap of writing in the world.

In 1994, Bloom published *The Western Canon*, a 578-page tome covering 26 authors from Shakespeare to Beckett. It was a book that compulsively repeated some of his *idées fixes*—the notion, for instance, that great writers, in order to reach selfhood, are engaged in "anxious" and parricidal struggles with one or another dominating predecessor. It was also a book that saw Bloom fighting his first real skirmish in the culture wars. It seems he had discovered what he dubbed "the School of Resentment" and "the commissars of gender and power." Deconstructionists and feminists, he belatedly noticed, were using literature not for aesthetic purposes but to further political agendas. Suitably alarmed, he now sallied forth in defense of the intrinsic value of literature.

To *The Western Canon* Bloom appended a 36-page list of canonical texts. It began with the epic of Gilgamesh and ended with Tony Kushner's (wholly worthless) *Angels in America*. It also declared the preeminence of Shakespeare—"the rock upon which the School of Resentment must founder." And now, in substantiation of that claim, comes *this* huge rock of a book. From it, we learn that the plays and poems of Shakespeare are not just "the center of the Western canon"; they are nothing less than "secular Scripture." Moreover, the Bard himself—not the man, of whom we know little, but the maker of the words—is "a mortal god." He is

> here, there, and everywhere at once. He is a system of northern lights, an *aurora borealis* visible where most of us will never go. Libraries (and playhouses) cannot contain him; he has become a spirit or "spell of light" almost too vast to apprehend.

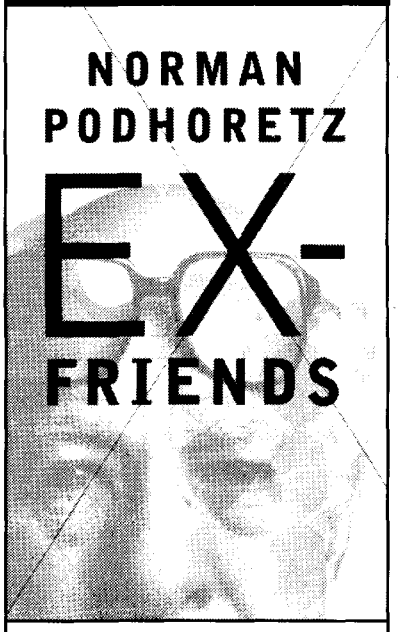
All this rapt prostration before an idol tells us much about Bloom. The more urgent question, though, is whether the book that is so full of this note is at all useful to those who want to understand the plays.

Donald Lyons *is the theater critic of the* New York Post.

"A memoir that you cannot put down and you won't forget."*

NORMAN PODHORETZ

EX-FRIENDS



"A remarkable account of the lost world of the New York intellectuals of the 1960s, of the politics of ideas in modern America."
—William Kristol,*
The Weekly Standard

"A fascinating and impressively honest book...positively Proustian."
—Paul Johnson

See page 5 for a special offer

THE FREE PRESS
A Division of Simon & Schuster
A VIACOM COMPANY
www.SimonSays.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BLOOM'S BOOK proceeds through genre groupings in rough chronological order. There are 35 chapters, beginning with *The Comedy of Errors*, dated to 1594, and ending with *The Two Noble Kinsmen* of 1613. A typical chapter begins by clearing away what Bloom regards as some misconception about the play at hand. Then perhaps some influence upon Shakespeare will be adduced, Bloom being after all the theorist of the "anxiety of influence." Thus, Iago in *Othello* is "Shakespeare's triumph over Christopher Marlowe, whose Barabas, Jew of Malta, had influenced the young Shakespeare so fiercely"; Edmund in *Lear* is Marlowe himself; Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* is the poet Ben Jonson; and so forth. Plenty of influence *by* Shakespeare is discussed, too: Iago is the "paradigm" for Milton's Satan; Hamlet is "Freud's mentor"; and so on.

Bloom, who cheerfully calls himself a "wicked old aesthete," is a brilliant man who has spent a lifetime looking for wisdom and joy in books. As he goes along in this way chapter by chapter, he makes many a striking observation and asks many a beautifully phrased question. But the nuggets are buried in heaps of slag. It is impossible to convey by quotation the verbosity and repetitiveness of these pages, which read almost like lecture notes given to assistants to type up. And the center of the whole is very tenuous indeed.

In brief, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* turns out to be another occasion for articulating, in extreme form, things that have been on Bloom's mind for quite a long time. He rose to literary fame in the 1960's and 1970's as an explicator of Romantic poetry, publishing books on Shelley, Blake, Yeats, and Wallace Stevens. And he was not just an explicator of those poets but a defiant defender and a passionate partisan.

Angered by what he saw as T. S. Eliot's "neo-Christian" denigration of the Romantics in favor of the wit and piety of the 17th-century Metaphysicals, Bloom found in the Romantic tradition both a poetic alternative and a comprehensive and urgent philosophy of life. He came to call this gnosticism. In Bloom's mental universe, this occult and slippery idea amounts to a kind of codified Emersonianism, according to which each successful soul must drag itself into the light, must wholly create itself, from a circumambient dark emptiness.

This antinomian scheme has been imported wholesale into *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. That explains why, in dismissing alleged misconceptions of the plays, Bloom usually fixates on critics of the Eliotic or Christian tradition. It also explains why he is notably and revealingly cool to the late romances (like *The Tempest* and *A Winter's Tale*), so full of spiritual healing and reconciliation. And finally it explains his obsession with two Shakespearean characters above all: Falstaff and Hamlet, who together, Bloom says, make up "the fullest representations of human possibility in Shakespeare."

Falstaff provokes Bloom to ecstasies of appreciation, of appropriation, indeed almost of identification. He has many things to say about the fat knight, whose ribald presence lights up *Henry IV*, and some of his observations are both familiar and true: "Wit is Falstaff's God"; "Falstaff instructs us in freedom"; and so forth. But he also repudiates as "irrelevant nonsense" the notion that Shakespeare himself might have in any way endorsed the later rejection of Falstaff by Prince Hal in the name of society or "order." Rather, he urges us to focus on the "Resurrection" of Falstaff in the play's final act, and proposes that "Shakespearean secularists should manifest their Bardolatry by celebrating" this event in "a day for loathing political ambition, religious hypocrisy, and false friendship." (It is always droll when tenured scholars urge abandon upon others.)

Still, in the end it is not Falstaff but Hamlet who for Bloom provides the real key to Shakespeare. First, he spills much ink asserting, without a shred of proof, that the first (lost) version of *Hamlet*, c. 1588-89, was written not by Thomas Kyd, as is commonly thought, but by Shakespeare himself. He does so in order to construct a Shakespeare who was, as he puts it, "his own precursor," his own influencer, his own reviser, his own gnostic self-creator. Next, we are instructed that if Falstaff stands for "play," Hamlet is himself a playwright—and not just any playwright, but *the* playwright. In the play-within-a-play scenes of *Hamlet*, Shakespeare, asserts Bloom, "allowed something very close to a fusion between Hamlet and himself," and in a bit of fanciful conjuring he adds that had the character Hamlet lived, "on or off a throne," he "would have written a *Hamlet*" and the rest of the late plays as well.

But stay—Hamlet is not just Shakespeare. In his melancholy, and even more in his "escape" from melancholy "into a high place in Act V, and [into] something like a radically new mode of secular transcendence," he is all of us. "We can hardly think about ourselves," writes Bloom, "without thinking about Hamlet." As "a universal instance of our will to identity," Hamlet must become, in a sense, our god.

AS HAS often been remarked, the result of banishing God is not a void called atheism but the erection of false gods. Marxism was one long illustration of this truth. Bloom's strategies in this book on Shakespeare are yet another. He insists again and again on the absence of religious belief—of Christian context—behind the plays. Then, having taken God out of Shakespeare, he proceeds to erect the playwright and his work into curious objects of worship.

Most unblinkered readers would demur on both counts, and rightly so. They sense that belief—both in religious order and in a derived po-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS ON

Religion & Social Theory

GOD AND CAESAR
TROELTSCH'S SOCIAL TEACHING AS LEGITIMATION
Constance L. Benson
With a foreword by Cornel West
1-56000-384-7 (cloth) 1998 324 pp. $44.95/£34.95

CULTS IN CONTEXT
READINGS IN THE STUDY OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS
Lorne L. Dawson, editor
0-7658-0478-6 (paper) 1998 480 pp. $29.95/£19.95

MAX WEBER AND ISLAM
Toby E. Huff and Wolfgang Schluchter, editors
1-56000-400-2 (cloth) 1998 264 pp. $34.95/£26.95

ON GOD, SPACE, AND TIME
Akiva Jaap Vroman
1-56000-397-9 (cloth) 1998 243 pp. $39.95/£31.95

RELIGION AND THE RISE OF CAPITALISM
R.H. Tawney
With a new introduction by Adam B. Seligman
0-7658-0455-7 (paper) 1998 335 pp. $24.95/£16.95

THE EXPERIENCE OF NOTHINGNESS
Michael Novak
With a new introduction by the author
1-56000-988-8 (paper) 1998 160 pp. $21.95/£14.95

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN HISTORY
George Walsh
1-56000-368-5 (cloth) 1998 235 pp. $34.95/£26.95

Visit our website at http://www.transactionpub.com
Order from your bookstore or direct from the publisher toll free 888-999-6778 or fax 732-748-9801.

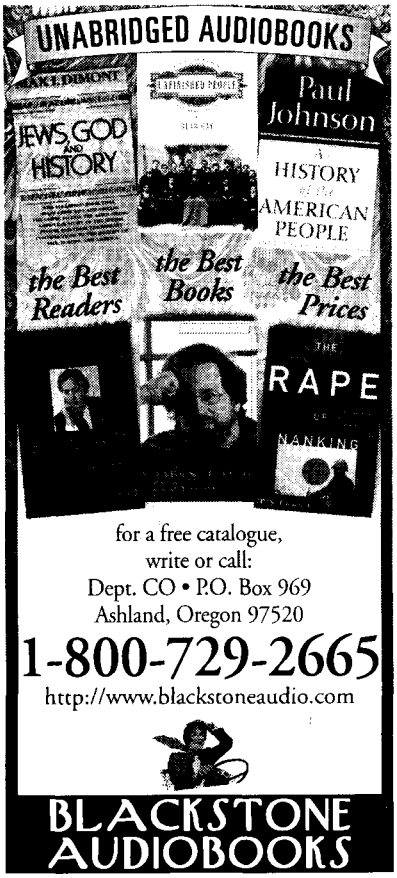
transaction

RUTGERS—THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY, DEPARTMENT A98RST1, 35 BERRUE CIRCLE, PISCATAWAY, NJ 08854-8042
BOOK REPRESENTATION AND DISTRIBUTION, LTD. 244A LONDON ROAD, HADLEIGH, ESSEX SS7 2DE, UNITED KINGDOM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

litical order—is somewhere in the background of Shakespeare's works. It is a belief often veiled by what Eliot called Senecan stoicism, and often put to severe tests, as in *King Lear*. But it is there. And it renders grotesque Bloom's habit of converting Shakespeare himself, and his characters, into divinities.

"We worship, in a secular way, this all-but-infinite consciousness," writes Bloom in a dithyramb to the Danish prince who exists only in Shakespeare's lines. Do not be fooled by that phrase, "in a secular way." All too often, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* reads less like literary criticism than like the founding document of a South Pacific cargo cult—the kind that worships Agatha Christie, or Prince Philip. The great pity is that, as a result, the life-giving work of Shakespeare is not clarified or magnified but obscured and curiously diminished.



In the Shadows

A Covert Life
Jay Lovestone: Communist, Anti-Communist, and Spy
by Ted Morgan

Random House. 416 pp. $29.95

Reviewed by
Harvey Klehr

SO MANY books about American Communism have been published over the past few years that an unwary reader might suspect it was actually a successful mass movement. Virtually every one of its leaders has been the subject of a full-length biography, and John Reed, one of the founding fathers of the American Communist party, has even been glorified by Hollywood in the 1981 film *Reds*.

Oddly, however, or perhaps not so oddly considering where he ended up on the political spectrum, Jay Lovestone, one of the most important figures ever to emerge from the American Communist movement, has been treated as a nonperson. Ted Morgan, the biographer of figures ranging from the young Winston Churchill to the writer William S. Burroughs, has now stepped into the breach, drawing on a wealth of newly available archival materials to offer a full account of Lovestone's suspenseful life behind the scenes.

THE YOUNGEST child of an Orthodox Jewish family in Lithuania, Jacob Liebstein arrived in New York in 1907 at the age of ten. Blond and blue-eyed, he Americanized himself rapidly, shedding any attachment to or interest in Judaism and changing his name in 1919 after graduating from City College, where he had been a leading socialist. That same year, he joined the newly formed Communist party and quickly became chief aide to its leader, Charles Ruthenberg, raising money, giving speeches, writing articles for the party's press, and, most importantly, perfecting his skills at organizing and infighting.

Following Ruthenberg's death in 1927, Lovestone was installed as party leader with support from the Communist International (Comintern) in Moscow. But he soon learned that what Moscow gave, it could take away. On a first visit to the USSR in 1925, he had befriended Stalin's rival Nikolai Bukharin, and he remained loyal to Bukharin even after the latter's standing began to slip in the murderous Kremlin power struggle of the 1920's. For this transgression, the Comintern demanded in 1929 that Lovestone turn over control of the Communist party to William Z. Foster, an unequivocal Stalin loyalist.

Lovestone resisted the edict. Remarkably, he even led a delegation to Moscow for a confrontation with the all-powerful Soviet leader himself. To no one's surprise, however, the Comintern rejected his faction, demanding that Lovestone and his allies surrender their posts and submit to unbending party discipline. When most of them refused, Stalin lost his temper. Lovestone was forcibly detained in the USSR, and managed to escape only with the help of a Latvian-American then working for the Soviet secret police.

By the time he returned to the United States, the Communist party was firmly in his enemies' hands, and Lovestone found himself leading a mere splinter group of 200 people, grandly named the Communist Party (Majority Group). Though this tiny organization was regularly denounced in the Communist press, and Lovestone himself was subjected to various forms of harassment by party agents, his faith in Communism remained, at least for a while, unsullied. He continued to regard the USSR as a "workers' state" and to support it by

HARVEY KLEHR *is co-author, with John Hynes, of* Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America, *to be published later this month by Yale University Press.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Spring 1999

May-Day for Oslo
Joel Singer

Russian Crime and American Intelligence
Fritz Ermarth

China: the Quest for Dignity
John Fitzgerald

On Europe:

Conrad Black: *Britain's Atlantic Option*

Max Beloff: *Tocqueville and the Odd Couple*

Loukas Tsoukalis *on Greece* Marshall Harris *on Macedonia*

The Poverty of Anti-Communism
John Lukacs
with comments by: Robert Conquest • William F. Buckley, Jr. • Nathan Glazer

Civilizations

What is "The West"?
John O'Sullivan

What is "America"?
Clifford Orwin

International Law and our Constitution
Jeremy Rabkin

Also: Fouad Ajami, Noel Malcolm, Anatol Lieven, Adam Garfinkle

SUBSCRIBE NOW (4 ISSUES, $26*) AND RECEIVE OUR SPECIAL ISSUE, *THE STRANGE DEATH OF SOVIET COMMUNISM,* ABSOLUTELY FREE!

❑ Bill me later ❑ Payment enclosed

*Outside the U.S. and Canada, please add $10 shipping.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____

State_____ Zip_____

Card no._____ exp._____

Send to: THE NATIONAL INTEREST, P.O. Box 622, Shrub Oak, NY 10588-0622, or call (800) 893-8944 or (914) 962-6297. COM399

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

various means, including through contacts with Soviet intelligence.

THEN CAME Stalin's show trials of the late 30's, and the execution of Bukharin in 1938. At last the scales fell from Lovestone's eyes. He broke with Communism for good, and devoted the rest of his life—he died in 1990, just after the collapse of the Soviet empire—to fighting it.

With his rich experience as an organizer, Lovestone found himself in much demand in the trade-union movement then grappling with widespread Communist infiltration of its ranks. Fighting one battle after another, first inside the garment-workers' union, then among the auto workers, by 1944 Lovestone was invited by George Meany to take charge of the American Federation of Labor's foreign-policy arm, newly set up to provide support to independent trade unions around the world.

For the next several decades, Lovestone waged a quiet form of organizational warfare that had a profound impact on the course of the cold war. In France and Italy, he played a vital role in the struggle with Communist apparatchiks fighting furiously for control of labor movements. In occupied Germany, he worked successfully to resurrect a democratic labor movement, steering a course between American civilian authorities sympathetic to Communist unions and American generals hostile to unionization in any shape or form.

By the late 1940's, Lovestone had established ties with the newly formed CIA, which was then eager to support social democracies as a bulwark against Communism. CIA funds enabled Lovestone to expand his operations in Europe and branch out into Asia, Africa, and eventually Latin America as well. Initially, Lovestone distrusted the CIA, complaining constantly about its callousness and its mistaken priorities. But relations improved when the legendary spymaster James Jesus Angleton became director of CIA counterintelligence in 1954 and was handed the "Lovestone account." The two became close personal friends as well as ideological soulmates. For the next twenty years, Lovestone used his extensive network of international contacts to pass along political and economic information and gossip, while Angleton paid most of the bills.

Ironically, in a classic case of the left and right hand of government acting out of sync, the FBI began investigating Lovestone in 1950 on the suspicion that he was a Soviet spy: his mail was intercepted and screened, his telephone was tapped, and he was tailed. It took until 1952 for the FBI to figure out that Lovestone was working with the CIA; the investigation itself was not closed until 1957.

MORGAN'S BIOGRAPHY, which will undoubtedly stand as the definitive account of the man, is full of similarly engrossing tales of cold-war finagling. Although some aspects of the story, such as Lovestone's links with Soviet intelligence in the 1930's, would have benefited from deeper explication, covert lives by definition are difficult to unveil, and Lovestone was a man who relished working in the shadows. In any case, Morgan tells his story straightforwardly and with verve, providing just enough background to enable readers to follow the twists and turns of Lovestone's trail without getting bogged down in minutiae.

What, ultimately, does Morgan make of that trail? The judgment of *A Covert Life* might best be described as mixed but sympathetic. Jay Lovestone the human being does not exactly come across as a warm or expansive type: although intensely loyal to those he worked with, he was also an acerbic, demanding, hypercritical workaholic with virtually no outside interests. But this somewhat constricted personality played a significant role in the all-important cause of preventing Communist domination of European labor unions at a time when the American government had not yet recognized the nature of Stalinism or the need to combat it.

It is certainly true, as some of Lovestone's critics on the Left charged, that in advancing his cause, Lovestone the fanatical anti-Communist employed many of the manipulative tactics he had first learned in the Communist party—including the use of front organizations, factional warfare, and secret government funds. But it is also true that the Communists he was battling employed the same methods and worse, and that they enjoyed vastly deeper pockets filled with KGB gold. What is decisive is that the unions Lovestone helped build in Europe and in former colonies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America proved to be building blocks of democracy. In the end, Jay Lovestone may have lived a covert life, but his enduring achievements were of the most admirably public sort.

On Native Grounds?

Enlarging America:
The Cultural Work of Jewish Literary Scholars, 1930-1990
by Susanne Klingenstein
Syracuse. 492 pp. $34.95

Reviewed by
Edward Alexander

LUDWIG LEWISOHN, a Berlin-born Jew who came of age in Charleston, South Carolina, and as a youth made himself over into a churchgoing Southern gentleman, had to leave Columbia University in 1903 without his doctorate in literature because, he was told, there was no future for him in the field: the prejudice against hiring Jews in En-

EDWARD ALEXANDER's *most recent book is* Irving Howe: Socialist, Critic, Jew *(Indiana).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

glish departments was insuperable. Two decades later, reflecting on the appointment of a number of Jewish scholars in American colleges and universities, Lewisohn, who by then had become an influential drama critic, noted that in one discipline alone the old resistance still remained firm: "Prejudice has not . . . relented in a single instance in regard to the teaching of English." Perhaps this was because the study of English, unlike that of science or even philosophy, was intimately bound up with the particularities of culture. Those who ran the English departments—the "Angry Saxons," in the phrase of the art connoisseur Bernard Berenson—were determined to protect Tennyson's "treasure/of the wisdom of the West" from barbarous East European invaders.

Of course, all this would change. Susanne Klingenstein, a German-born Jewish teacher of writing at MIT who did her graduate work and research at Harvard, has taken the story of that change as her special province. Her first book, *Jews in the American Academy: 1900-1940* (1991), provided brief intellectual biographies of such early figures as the philosophers Harry Wolfson and Morris Raphael Cohen and the literary scholars Joel Spingarn, Jacob Zeitlin, and Lionel Trilling. In her judgment, it was Trilling's ultimately successful breakthrough at Columbia—he received a full-time appointment to the English faculty in 1939—that brought to a "happy end" the story of what had hitherto looked like an impossible "Jewish folly." In her new book, she deals with the next generation or two of literary scholars and critics, bringing the story more or less up to the present.

The book's first section, "The Harvard Circle," describes and analyzes the careers and ideas of Harry Levin, a pioneering interpreter of Joyce, Proust, and Eliot; M.H. Abrams, the greatest modern scholar of English romanticism; and Daniel Aaron, a seminal figure in American studies. These formidable Jewish minds, who entered the university from the 1920's through the 1940's, professionalized literary scholarship by replacing parochial standards of "custom" and "taste" with the criteria of intellectual excellence. But they had no intellectual interest in their own Jewish heritage, and were not religious.

This creates some difficulty for Klingenstein, who wants to identify ways in which the Jewishness of these scholars was somehow relevant to them or their scholarship. In the case of Levin, she decides that his "secret blemish" established a kinship between him and other mavericks in the Harvard of his day like Irving Babbitt, the apostle of "neo-Humanism," and the homosexual F.O. Matthiessen. As for Abrams, who wished to forge a relation to Christian culture without formally embracing it, he developed a doctrine of imaginative sympathy and consent whereby, for example, Dante's Catholic universe could be extradited, through the formal medium of poetry, to "all of us." Even Aaron, far more distant than either Levin or Abrams from a sense of Jewish identity, wrote a "Jewish book" when he edited the diary of a half-mad racist named Arthur Inman: by exercising his special gift for entering another person's mind, Aaron betrayed his links to "an all-consuming obsession in postmodern Jewish literature, namely, the uncertainty of what and who is real."

When she moves on to the postwar Harvard figure of Leo Marx, Klingenstein wisely gives up this attempt to identify the elusive Jewish element. In 1949, Marx left Harvard for the University of Minnesota, where he founded the American-studies program. Staffed largely by

There's An
Old Southern
Saying...

~ William May Stern ~

A book of wit and wisdom that blends Norman Podhoretz's conservative world view and Woody Allen's sense of humor—with a distinctly Southern accent.

"An absolutely delightful collection of humorous and common sense sayings."

— The Tennessean

Paper • ***$13.95*** • At bookstores, or call **910-672-6889**

DOWN HOME PRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

acolytes of F.O. Matthiessen, the program attracted the subjects of Klingenstein's next two portraits, Allen Guttmann, who "cared as little about being Jewish as Marx," and Marx and Guttmann's foil, the engaging, Brooklyn-born Jules Chametzky. Rejecting the cosmopolitan idea of American literature, Chametzky stressed regional, ethnic, racial, and sexual factors, and made a point of providing a forum for those previously "unheard voices" of whom we now hear so very much.

THAT RELATIVELY minor figures like Guttmann and Chametzky should receive so much attention in this book—more, in fact, than a commanding authority like M.H. Abrams—is symptomatic of the problems in assuming, as Klingenstein does, a linear progression toward some happily expanded conception of what literary study consists of. In any case, the second half of *Enlarging America* shifts from the culture of Harvard to that of Columbia, and from professors of literature to literary critics.

Klingenstein begins here with four "refractions of Lionel Trilling," each purporting to show how the example set by Trilling helped ease the integration of Jews into the American literary world in general. The four are the novelist-critic Cynthia Ozick and the editor-critic Norman Podhoretz, both of whom began but did not end in English departments; the academic literary critic Steven Marcus; and the feminist literary scholar Carolyn Heilbrun. (Some of the anecdotes in this section, particularly those concerning Ozick and Podhoretz, are among the liveliest in an anecdote-filled book.) Klingenstein then turns, in a concluding section titled "The Rediscovery of Origins," to three literary scholars—Robert Alter, Ruth R. Wisse, and Sacvan Bercovitch—who received doctorates in English in the 1960's but, in a further complexification of the American story, ended up applying the critical perspectives gained in their general literary studies to the interpretation not only of English but of Jewish texts.

Alter, a student of both Trilling and Levin and a longtime professor of comparative literature at Berkeley, has also written important essays and books on Hebrew literature, including the Bible, thereby constructing, in Klingenstein's words, "an *oeuvre* that was unimaginable when Trilling and Levin attended college." Wisse's 1992 appointment to a chair at Harvard in Yiddish and comparative literature marked both a "closure and a new beginning": if assimilated Jewish scholars ready to give up their "particularity" had long been handsomely rewarded with places in departments considered central to the university's purpose, now a Jewish scholar working on a Jewish subject had been admitted to the inner sanctum. Bercovitch, a specialist in American literature at Harvard and the capstone of Klingenstein's discussion, actually does not quite belong in this grouping. Although he has done some translating from Yiddish, and in general seems to represent for Klingenstein the condition to which all literary scholarship should aspire, the "Jewish" element in his work is almost as elusive as it is in that of Levin, Abrams, or Aaron.

THIS IS in many ways a formidable book, prodigiously researched and written with vigor. For better and for worse, Klingenstein at times resembles a James Boswell with a tape recorder: diligent and ingenious in tracing personal and intellectual influences, she frequently seems to lack a sense of proportion or to know when to stop. Do we, for example, really need to be told the complete story of Sacvan Bercovitch's parents and of Jewish life in Ukraine to fathom his work?

On the other hand, when it comes to some crucial matters Klingenstein is mysteriously reticent. Politics is one of them. The (non-Jewish) F.O. Matthiesssen, for example, is presented here as a Christian idealist rather than as the apologist for Stalinist brutality that he was. More egregiously, although Klingenstein's typical pattern is to move deliberately through her subjects' books, Ruth Wisse's *If I Am Not for Myself . . . The Liberal Betrayal of the Jews* (1992), one of the most significant Jewish works of the past 50 years, goes unmentioned in text, bibliography, or index. Nor do we hear of the long, hostile review of the book that was written by Alter, here depicted by Klingenstein as an "unpolemical" person who would never use literary criticism "to advise a people on what it should or should not do."*

By ignoring the dispute between Wisse and Alter—a dispute over whether, for Jews, the safety of the Jewish people or the imperatives of liberalism should assume priority—Klingenstein misses a fine opportunity to bring her overall argument into focus and reach a balanced assessment of the benefits the enlargement of America has brought to academic Jews as Jews. Is there any connection at all between the success story of Jewish integration into the academy and the fact that, at a guess, 90 percent of Jewish professors of English cannot read their way around a *dreydl*, or that virtually every professor in this book, except for Wisse, espouses the *derigueur* liberalism that dominates today's campuses, not least on the issue of the security of Israel?

Klingenstein's Panglossian manner tends to override all qualms. True, she ends her book by remarking that the Jews' "integration into literary academe, unlike that of any other group, was accompanied by the almost complete loss of their cultural heritage and concomitant communal self-esteem." But in view of the sanguine tone of the previous 400 pages, this recognition seems too little, too late.

* For my own discussion of this episode, see "The Nerve of Ruth Wisse" in the May 1993 COMMENTARY.

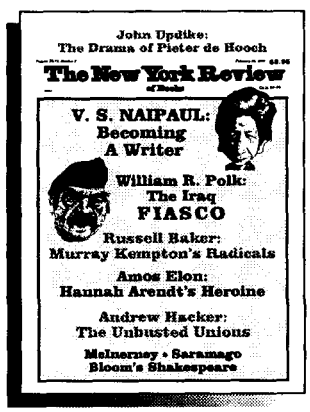
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Subscribe now to

"the leading intellectual forum in the US"

—*New York* magazine

Garry Wills: Italy's Lyric Dictator
The New York Review
Rosemary Dinnage: 'Elegy for Iris'
V. S. Naipaul: India
IAN BURUMA: THE ZEN MODERNIST
Fintan O'Toole:
The Seamus Heaney Saga



For thirty-five years contributors to *The New York Review of Books*—including John Updike and James Fenton, Susan Sontag and Garry Wills, Joan Didion and Stephen Jay Gould, plus many more—step outside their roles as authors and artists, poets and scientists, prime ministers and presidents to write essays and critical reviews of works from their peers and others. Encompassing much more than literature, *The New York Review of Books* covers art, politics, science, history, education and music with incomparable wit, clarity, and brilliance.

Subscribe to *The New York Review* now, and you'll not only save over 60% off the newsstand price, but you'll also get a free copy of *Selections* (not available in bookstores). With this limited offer, you'll receive:

➤ **20 Issues** You'll enjoy a full year's subscription of 20 issues for just $29.97—that's almost 50% off the regular subscription rate of $58.00, and a saving of $49.03 (over 60%) off the newsstand price.

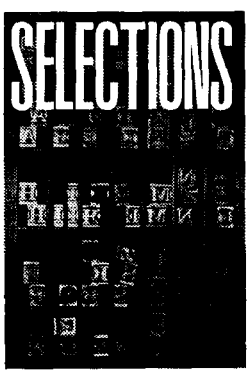
➤ **A Free Book** You'll receive—absolutely FREE—*Selections*, a collection of 19 reviews and essays published verbatim from our first two issues. In it you'll discover how works such as *Naked Lunch* or *The Fire Next Time*, now regarded as modern classics, were perceived by critics when they were first published and reviewed.

➤ **A No-Risk Guarantee** If you are unhappy with your subscription at any time, you may cancel and we will refund the unused portion of your subscription cost. What's more, *Selections* is yours to keep as our gift to you for trying *The New York Review of Books*.

The New York Review of Books

Return to: Subscriber Service Dept., PO Box 420382, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0382

☑**Yes!** I would like to subscribe to *The New York Review* at the one-year (20 issues) introductory rate of only $29.97. I save over 60% off the newsstand price, and with my paid subscription, I will also receive *Selections*—FREE. And, I understand that I may cancel at any time and will be refunded for the unused portion of my subscription.



FREE BOOK
with this offer!

Name _____

Address _____

_____

City/State/Zip _____

A 9 C C 4 G

❑ $29.97 enclosed* Charge my: ❑ AmEx ❑ MasterCard ❑ Visa ❑ Bill me. (for US only)

Credit Card Number _____

Expiration Date/Signature _____

For faster service, fax your credit card orders to: (212) 586-8003.

Please include your own phone and fax number in case of questions. *If you fax this order, do not also mail it.*

*Make checks or US money orders payable to The New York Review of Books. We accept US Dollars drawn on a US bank, Canadian Dollars drawn on a Canadian bank, or Pounds Sterling drawn on a UK bank. If paying by check in CDN$ or Pounds Sterling: return to Mike Johnson, The New York Review of Books, 1755 Broadway, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10019-3780. We cannot accept international money orders.

Rates Outside the US: Canada: $49.97/$70CDN. Rest of World Regular Post (recommended for Europe only): $59.97/£37.25. Rest of World Print Flow Air Post (2–3 week delivery time; strongly recommended for the Far East, Australia, Africa, New Zealand, and South America): $86.97/£54. Credit card orders will be charged in US Dollars rates shown. Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Looking Forward

The Future and Its Enemies: The Growing Conflict Over Creativity, Enterprise, and Progress
by Virginia Postrel
Free Press. 272 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Daniel Casse

AS THE editor of *Reason* magazine and the author of a consistently spry column in *Forbes*, Virginia Postrel has been an original and unrelenting critic of the politicians, bureaucrats, and self-appointed social guardians who put more faith in their own meliorative powers than in the wisdom of free markets and individual choice. In so doing, she has helped to rescue libertarian thought from the margins of American politics and the uncrowded corners of economics and philosophy departments.

But Postrel's new book is no mere brief for the ideas of such leading lights of libertarianism as Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman. *The Future and Its Enemies* is an ambitious work of political and cultural commentary. Casting aside the ideological labels that have long dominated our public discourse, Postrel aims to do nothing less than redefine how we see American politics—a goal, alas, that she falls decidedly short of reaching.

IN RECENT years, according to Postrel, the line separating liberals and conservatives has been blurred to the point of irrelevance. The issues and controversies of our day have sparked surprising new alliances that defy the familiar divide between Left and Right. Erstwhile political opponents now often find themselves on the same side of the barricades.

The source of this shift, Postrel argues, is a deepening conflict in American society between two basic outlooks on the future. Arrayed on one side are the villains of her account: those who fear and resist change, seeking "stability and control" in a "regulated, engineered world." These "stasists," as she calls them, run the political gamut from Right to Left, from cultural reactionaries to technocrats, but increasingly they form a common front. Curtailing immigration into the U.S. has thus become a priority not only for right-wing populists like Patrick J. Buchanan but also for left-wing environmental groups like the Sierra Club. Likewise, the new coalition against free trade embraces such disparate types as New Right organizer Paul Weyrich, consumer-movement founder Ralph Nader, and the anti-technology activist Jeremy Rifkin.

The white hats in Postrel's account sit atop the heads of those who, by contrast, celebrate the future in all its promise and uncertainty. Counting herself among these "dynamists," Postrel follows Hayek in calling them "the party of life." Believers in the possibility of progress, they are devoted to learning and experimentation, free markets and technological innovation. "Dynamists," Postrel writes, "do not expect, demand, or desire a world that stands still."

How this disposition works out in political terms is clear enough. Dynamists are advocates of limited, decentralized government, and they resist all but the most essential regulation of the private sector. They endorse schemes of privatization for Social Security, education, and even the national parks. And they are deeply suspicious of moralizing politicians, believing, for instance, that Congress has no business man-

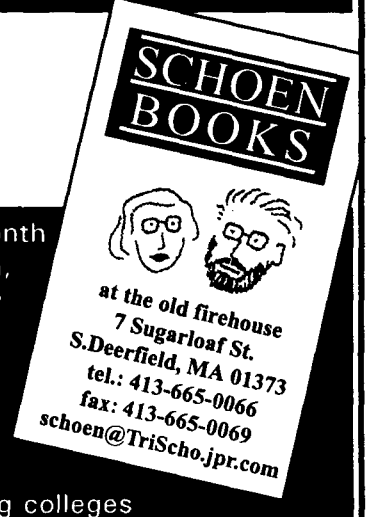
DANIEL CASSE *is a senior director of the White House Writers Group, a public policy communications firm.*

Once upon a time, there was a young man named Ken who collected books. Soon, there were so many books, and so little room, that he realized he had to become a bookdealer and move to bigger digs.

Ken married Jane and they moved to an old brick firehouse in Western Massachusetts. They filled the building with shelves and their growing collection remarkable books.

Judaica in all languages,
exile literature,
the Holocaust,
the Middle East,
psychoanalysis,
& the social sciences.

A catalogue goes out every month to the four corners of the earth, and then the orders come in by phone, fax, e-mail, and...Yes... people occasionally do ring our doorbell. So, when you're visiting in the area... at the National Yiddish Book Center, off to ski in Vermont, or touring colleges with your kids, come browse & schmooze with us!

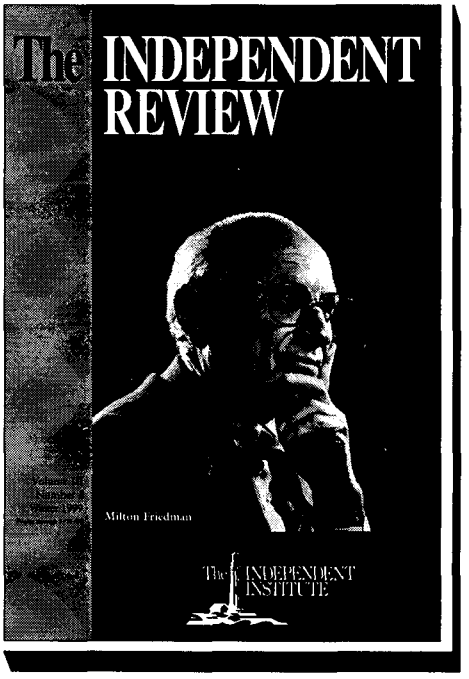


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Indispensable Journal Of Ideas

Looking for fresh approaches to key public policy issues instead of the usual stale and strident partisanship? Then you should be reading ***The INDEPENDENT REVIEW,*** the acclaimed, quarterly journal that critically examines the politicization and bureaucratization of our world. ***The INDEPENDENT REVIEW*** is superbly written, provocative, and based on solid scholarship. Featuring path-breaking studies by many of the world's finest scholars and policy experts, its authors represent a variety of disciplines, intellectual traditions, and economic perspectives.

Probing the most difficult and pressing of social, economic and legal questions, ***The INDEPENDENT REVIEW*** features in-depth examinations of current issues viewed in comprehensive historical, ethical, and economic perspectives, and written in clear, vigorous English. Undaunted and uncompromising, ***The INDEPENDENT REVIEW*** is *the* journal that is pioneering future policy debate!



*"**The Independent Review** is of great interest."*
— C. Vann Woodward, Pulitzer Prize-winner, Yale University
"Excellent, diverse, and wide-ranging."
— Irving Louis Horowitz, Rutgers University
*"**The Independent Review** is the most exciting new journal in many years."*
— William Niskanen, former Chairman, Council of Economic Advisors
*"**The Independent Review** is distinctive in badly needed ways."*
— Leland Yeager, Professor of Economics, Auburn University
*"**The Independent Review** is an exciting new journal."*
— John Diggins, Prof. of History, City University of New York
"A great team, economic logic and tough analysis."
— Bruce Yandle, Former Executive Director, F.T.C.
"Avoids faddish pyrotechnics while seeking objectivity and high standards."
— Timur Kuran, Prof. of Economics, U. of Southern California

In Recent Issues:

Is Microsoft a Monopolist?
— Richard B. McKenzie and William F. Shughart II
Democracy and War
— Ted Galen Carpenter
On the Nature of Civil Society
— Charles K. Rowley
Did Adam Smith Retard the Development of Economic Analysis?
— James C. W. Ahiakpor
The Neglected Politics of the American Founding
— Andrew Rutten
Crime Control Through Private Enterprise
— Bruce L. Benson
The Endangered Species Act: Who's Saving What?
— Randy T. Simmons
How Big a Budget Do the People Prefer?
— Earl R. Brubaker
The Case Against Psychiatric Coercion
— Thomas S. Szasz

- ✦ Feature Articles
- ✦ Book Reviews
- ✦ Special Features
- ✦ Figures and Tables
- ✦ 160 Pages per Issue
- ✦ March, June, Sept. & Dec.
- ✦ Annual Index
- ✦ Plus more . . .

Individual Subscriptions:
$27.95/1 year, $52.95/2 years
Institutional Subscriptions:
$83.95/1 year, $158.95/2 years
International Orders:
Add $28 per year shipping

Order Toll-Free (U.S.)
800-927-8733
Phone: **510-632-1366**
Fax: **510-568-6040**
review@independent.org
http://www.independent.org

The INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE

"Enlightening ideas for public policy"
100 Swan Way, Dept. D8
Oakland, CA 94621-1428 USA

Look for *The INDEPENDENT REVIEW* on better newsstands and in bookstores!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dating V-chips to screen out objectionable television shows or passing laws to curb Internet pornography.

For Postrel, however, dynamism represents far more than a set of public policies or attitudes toward government. It is a philosophy of life, reflecting the fact that "change and self-transformation are among the truest expressions of our enduring human nature." The key to happiness, according to the "dynamist moral vision," thus lies in endless opportunities "to stretch ourselves" and "to try new things." This life-affirming ethic can be seen, Postrel maintains, in everything from the spontaneous emergence of beach volleyball as an Olympic sport to the widespread use of new technology like in-vitro fertilization to the complex evolution of reggae music.

Such developments may be greeted by stasists with indifference or alarm, Postrel observes, but dynamists rightly see them as evidence of society's astonishing variety and resilience as well as of history's ultimate purpose. "We live in an enchanted world," she concludes, "a world suffused with intelligence, a world of our making. In such plenitude . . . lies an adventurous future."

WHAT IS one to say of this sweeping analysis and the agenda that goes with it? First and most obviously, there is the problem of labeling. It is not just that Postrel's clumsy coinages are unlikely to find their way onto the Sunday political talk shows. More fundamentally, her division of the political world into stasists and dynamists is misleading, even—one suspects—intentionally diversionary. *The Future and Its Enemies* seems like nothing so much as an attempt to repackage libertarianism, giving it the appealing name of "dynamism" while throwing together into one "stasist" camp those who happen to oppose it in some way, however different their grounds for doing so.

This may explain why Postrel's taxonomy is so unhelpful once one looks beyond the handful of highly contested issues, like immigration and free trade, on which some elements of the Left and the Right have indeed come together in recent years against mainstream "dynamist" opinion. As any reasonably informed observer knows, these coalitions have been temporary and tactical, and have reflected no sort of fundamental consensus. When it comes to the great majority of our most divisive issues—abortion, affirmative action, military spending, gay rights, school prayer, the scope of free speech, medical ethics, the role of the courts—the supposed unity of Postrel's stasists and dynamists vanishes.

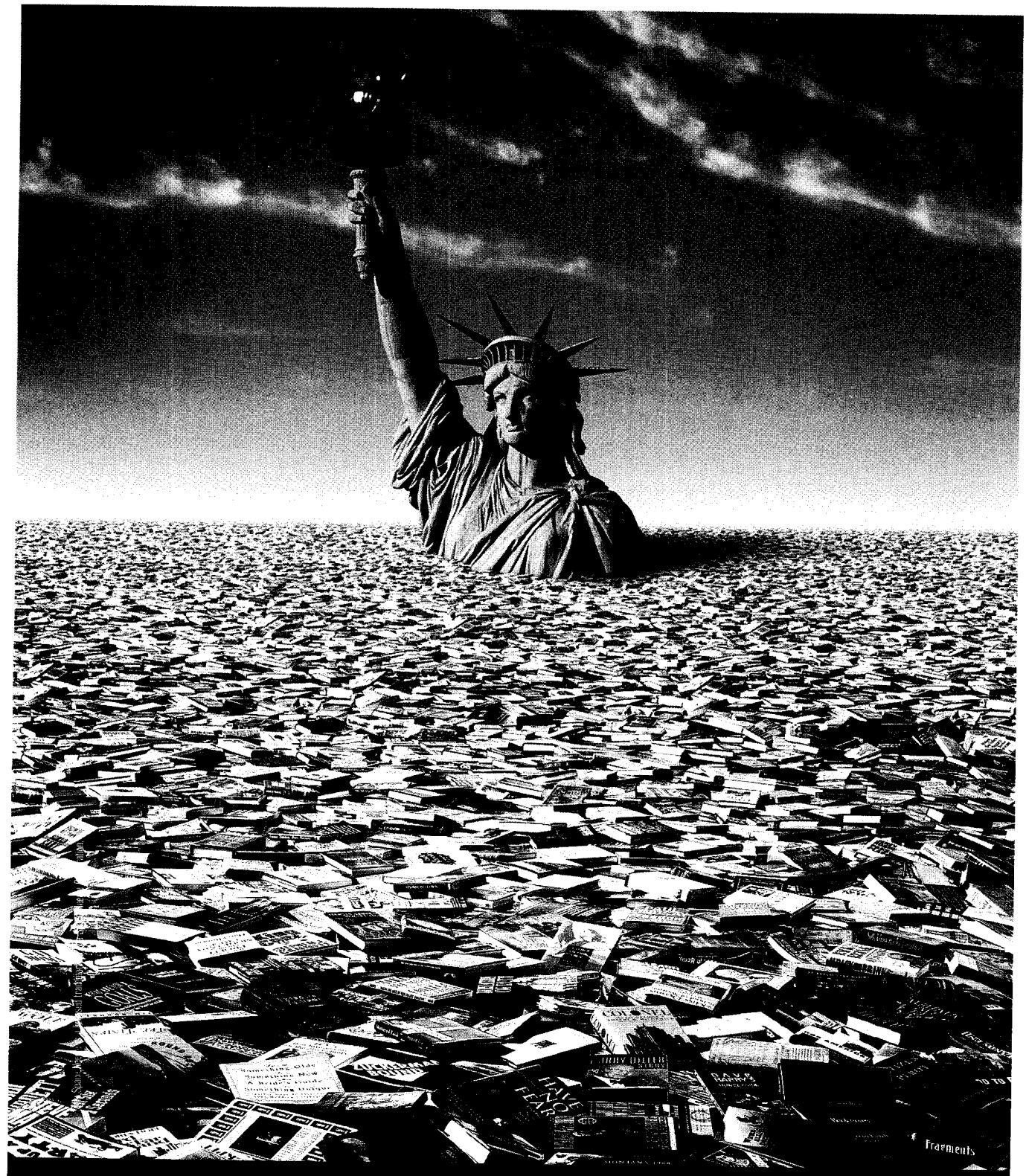
As for dynamism itself, Postrel's error, like that of libertarianism more generally, is to assume that the same principles of change and absolute openness must apply across every realm of life. By this logic, if dynamism deserves to be celebrated when we see it at work in the entrepreneurship of Silicon Valley—as surely it does—then it must be no less desirable in our families, our culture, and our politics. This is, to say the least, an exceedingly superficial philosophy.

Is one really an "enemy of the future" for wanting public authorities to limit access to Internet pornography, or for thinking that assisted suicide and human cloning are bad ideas, or for resisting the campaign to legalize drugs? For Postrel, any impediment to these developments—and thus to the fullest possible range of individual choice—is immediately suspect. For most other people, the fruits of "progress" have to be sorted with care, and sometimes demand that we exercise a measure of collective moral and political judgment.

Postrel's failure to make such distinctions gives *The Future and Its Enemies* a deeply unsettling quality. Beneath the book's free-market enthusiasm lurks a strongly relativistic view of American life. For Postrel, change often appears to be an end in itself. She seems to care little about the actual content of American character, so long as it is "dynamic." Amid page after page devoted to spontaneity, imagination, and creativity, one finds next to nothing about such bedrock American values as self-restraint, moderation, and patriotism, or how we might go about cultivating them.

By failing to give credit to these "stasist" qualities, Postrel offers a crude picture of contemporary society, missing its many subtle tensions and ambiguities. Indeed, it is precisely because Americans maintain a richer, more complex view of the changes swirling around them that the future remains in far less peril than Virginia Postrel would have us believe.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



A BOOKSTORE TOO BIG FOR THE PHYSICAL WORLD.

The only place big enough to hold Amazon.com is the Internet. With 2.5 million titles, at up to 40% off, the one you're after is only a click away.

amazon.com

A BETTER WAY TO BUY BOOKS.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THANKS TO PHILLIPS, WEARY TRAVELERS WILL ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE TO STOP AND REFUEL.

By donating a former plant site to the Cactus Playa Lake Project, Phillips Petroleum helped expand and protect the habitat of hundreds of thousands of migratory birds. The project resulted from the cooperative effort of Phillips, wildlife and conservation agencies and the community of Cactus, Texas. Now bald eagles, waterfowl and dozens of other bird species have a better place to rest along the Central Flyway. It's yet another example of what it means to be The Performance Company.

PHILLIPS PETROLEUM COMPANY

For a copy of our annual report, call 918-661-3700, write to: Phillips Annual Report, B-41, Adams Bldg., Bartlesville, OK 74004, or visit us at www.phillips66.com.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED